FIRE & SWORD IN THE CAUCASUS

LUIGI VILLARI

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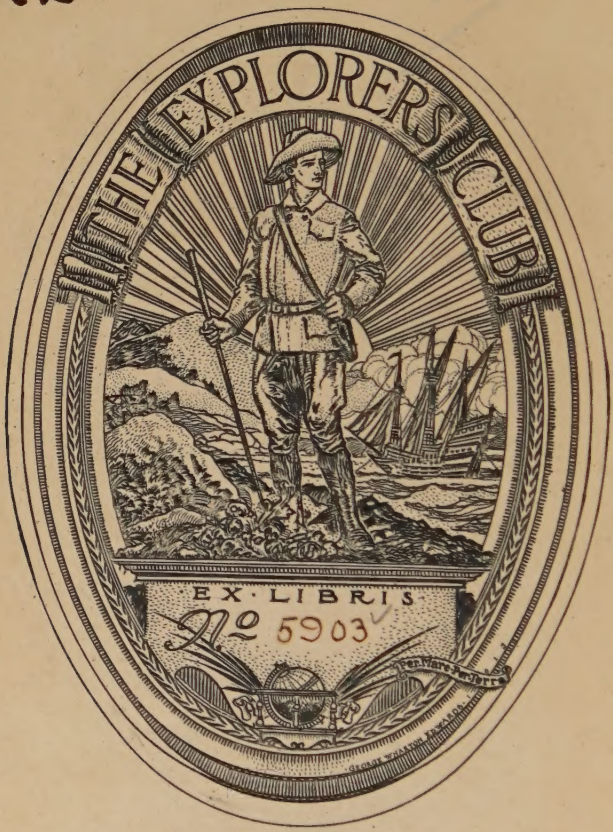

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James B. Ford

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FIRE AND SWORD IN THE CAUCASUS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Uniform with this Volume.

RUSSIA UNDER THE GREAT SHADOW.

FIRE AND SWORD IN THE CAUCASUS

BY

LUIGI VILLARI

AUTHOR OF "RUSSIA UNDER THE GREAT SHADOW"
"GIOVANNI SEGANTINI," ETC

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE revolutionary outbreaks by which Russia has been disturbed from end to end during the last eighteen months, have assumed an exceptionally interesting aspect in the parts of the Empire inhabited by alien races. Old national ideals, which were believed to be buried and forgotten, others whose very existence few suspected, have sprung to life, armed and formidable. While the autocracy is fighting for its life against the onslaught of political and social revolution, its border provinces are seething with Nationalist discontent, and are a prey to violent uprisings. Poles, Finns, Letts, Georgians, Armenians, are all demanding the rights so long denied them, and their demands are backed by rifles, revolvers, and bombs.

No part of Russia at the present moment is more full of acute problems of great interest for the student of politics than the Caucasus. There, side by side with Nationalist claims and bitter racial and religious animosities, we see attempts to realize the conceptions of Social Democracy; together with evidences of mediæval barbarism we find men actually putting the theories of Marx into practice. For many months the country has been the theatre of a

civil war, accompanied by every circumstance of horror. Thousands of people have been killed, hideous crimes have been and are still being perpetrated, and a vast amount of property has been destroyed. The Russian authorities oscillate between brutal reaction and weak concession, with occasional lucid intervals of liberal statesmanship. Yet out of all this chaos of bloodshed and ruin some good may come, and, indeed, I am sure will come. For there will at last be a chance for the free development of those nationalities which have for so long been the step-children of a historic fatality. It seemed at one time as though these peoples, who have kept alight the torch of Christianity and civilization amidst the darkness of Oriental savagery for fifteen centuries, were destined to disappear, to be absorbed into those greater and more expansive races who are spreading their dominion all over the earth, or to be wiped out by more savage and less civilized fighting peoples. Such a state of things would have been in every way regrettable ; for while in all other parts of the world local patriotism and provincial ideals, which have given us so much in the way of political and social development, seem to be dying out, overwhelmed by the large, political units, it is only in such regions as the Mediterranean East that there are left, in the words of Mr. James Bryce, "nationalities with a capacity for developing into independent nations that may create new types of character and new forms of literary and artistic life." * Moreover, some of these

* Introduction to "The Balkan Question," by various writers, p. 13.

nations have achieved enough in the past to warrant us in the conviction that under favourable conditions they may do more, much more in the future.

. . . . .

In writing the ensuing pages I have tried to present a sketch of this great Russian colony during what is perhaps the most critical period of its history. I spent several months, during the summer and autumn of 1905, visiting every important centre of political unrest in the Caucasus, and inquiring into the general conditions of the country; for this purpose I consulted numbers of people of all classes, races, and religions, from the Russian Viceroy down to simple peasants, from the chief of the secret police to the Georgian revolutionary leaders, not to mention the editors of local papers, and the foreign residents and consuls; and I am bound to say that I found everybody, with rare exceptions, most anxious to assist me, and that I was treated with the greatest possible kindness and hospitality. It would be invidious to single out by name any of the people to whom I am so deeply indebted, while to include them all would fill several pages. I must, however, express my especial indebtedness to Mr. J. Gordon Browne, who was my travelling companion for the greater part of my trip, and by his thorough knowledge of Russia and of Russian was an invaluable and ungrudging helper.

If I succeed in calling the attention of the public to the state of things in the Caucasus and in arousing some little sympathy in the civilized West for these

struggling and suffering peoples of the East, my object will have been gained. I may perhaps seem to be unduly partial towards the Armenians, but all I can say in explanation of my attitude is that I went out with an absolutely unbiassed mind, and that the conclusions at which I have arrived are the result of inquiries from all sources, including many which are decidedly unfavourable to that nationality. I have dwelt particularly on this point, as the Armenians are certainly one of the most unpopular races of the East, and they have been grossly libelled by ignorant and prejudiced critics, including some of English nationality.

The photographs, except when otherwise stated, are my own.

L. V.

March, 1906.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF RECENT EVENTS IN THE CAUCASUS

June 12,	1903.	Prince Golytzin confiscates property of Armenian Church.
July	„	Strikes at Baku and on the Transcaucasian Railway.
Aug.	„	General Von Wahl goes from St. Petersburg to Baku to inquire into the condition of the town, where General Odintzoff is Governor.
Oct.	„	Armenians attempt the life of Golytzin.
Jan.	1904.	Prince Nakashidze appointed Governor of Baku.
July	„	Golytzin departs from the Caucasus on leave, never to return.
		General Freze appointed acting Governor-General afterwards General Malama.
Dec.	„	Prince Nakashidze goes to St. Petersburg to confer with Golytzin, and returns soon after.
Jan. 14,	1905.	Golytzin relieved of his functions.
Feb. 19	„	First outbreak of the Tartars against the Armenians at Baku (400 to 500 killed and wounded).
Feb. 22	„	Order restored.
March	„	Small outbreak at Erivan.
May 18	„	Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff (appointed Viceroy in February) arrives at Tiflis.
May 24	„	Prince Nakashidze murdered at Baku.
May 25	„	Outbreak at Nakhitchevan (300 killed and wounded in town and district).
		General Alikhanoff sent to restore order.
June 5–6	„	Second outbreak at Erivan (52 killed and wounded).
		Prince Napoleon appointed Governor-General of Erivan. Recalls Alikhanoff.
Aug. 29 to Sept. 2	„	Outbreak at Shusha (300 killed and wounded, damages estimated at 5,000,000 roubles).

Sept. 2–6, 1905. Second outbreak at Baku (600 to 700 killed and wounded, damages 25,000,000 roubles.

Sept. 11 „ Massacre of Georgian Social Democrats by Cossacks in the Tiflis Town Hall.

Oct. 1 „ Third outbreak at Erivan.

Oct. 9 „ Bombs thrown at the Cossacks at Tiflis.

Oct. 28 „ Railway strike begins.

Oct. 30 „ Constitutional Manifesto.

Oct. 31 „ Social Democratic and Armenian Demonstration at Baku.

Nov. 1–4 „ Third outbreak at Baku.

Nov. 4–10 „ Demonstration and riots at Tiflis.

Nov. 29 to Dec. 3 „ Outbreak between Tartars and Armenians at Elizavetpol.

Dec. 1–4 „ Armeno-Tartar outbreak at Tiflis. Tartars from the country try to come into Tiflis. Fight with Armenians and Socialists. Troops intervene.

Dec. 28 „ to Jan. 6, 1906 Political strike at Tiflis. Bombs thrown. Troops bombard houses. Fierce reaction. Massacre of railwaymen by troops.

Jan. „ Serious revolt in Georgia; ferocious repression by Cossacks and soldiers.

CHAPTER I

THE CAUCASUS, ITS PEOPLES, AND ITS HISTORY

THE history of Russia has been a series of expansions to the west, the south, and the east, towards the open sea. Each territory occupied was, sooner or later, absorbed into the Empire of which it became in every way an integral part. The fact that Russia was not separated from her colonial possessions by the sea made the process of absorption easier, and the line of demarcation between the mother-country and her colonies is therefore less definite than in the case of Britain or France. Moreover, the fact that the Empire has hitherto been governed despotically made the question of the forms of government to be adopted in the various provinces less important than it is in constitutionally governed States. The general aim of the ruling classes has been to assimilate as far as possible every part of the Empire, from Poland to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic Sea to Mount Ararat. Yet as a matter of fact the conditions are very different, and while we have a central mass of Russian-speaking peoples, numbering more than half the entire population of the Empire and inhabiting a vast, monotonous

zone of plains, on the borders there are provinces as different from Russia proper and from each other as any in the dominions of England. Of all these border-lands, none exceeds in interest that region known as the Caucasus. Its giant mountains, its magnificent scenery, its rich and varied vegetation, its extraordinary collection of different races, speaking countless languages, and representing almost every branch of the human family, its strange history and the beautiful monuments of its art, make of it a wonderland of romance, exercising a fascination on all who visit it.

Caucasia is a broad isthmus between the Black Sea and the Caspian, traversed by a great chain of mountains rising to a height of 18,000 feet. North of the range is a region of interminable plains, known as the Northern Caucasus, or Ciscaucasia, merging imperceptibly into the steppes of the Don and the Volga. Southwards is Transcaucasia, a semi-tropical country intersected by many smaller ranges of mountains, of which the most important are the so-called Anti-Caucasus and the Armenian group. The Caucasus divides Europe from Asia as by a great barrier of ice and snow and rock; at no other point are the two continents so sharply separated. Yet historically and ethnographically the separation is not so absolute as it appears. The barrier, like other mountain chains, has not proved an insuperable one, and Asiatics have poured across it into Europe from time immemorial, and Europeans have entered Asia by the same route; at the same time some Western elements have come to the Caucasus by sea or overland through Asia Minor,

and Eastern peoples have penetrated from the north to the south. The two continents overlap, as it were, and we find Christian races of Indo-European stock south of the mountains, and Moslem Turanians in the northern steppes; sedentary and civilized peoples in Asia, barbarian nomads in Europe. But geographically the character of the two regions is quite distinct; the Northern Caucasus is a continuation of the great plains of Russia, while the fertile valleys of western Transcaucasia and the arid deserts of the eastern provinces are redolent of the Asiatic East. In the north the chief rivers are the Terek and the Kuban, while in Transcaucasia the principal streams flowing into the Black Sea are the Rion (the ancient Phasis) and the Ingur, and into the Caspian flows the Kura, with its tributary the Araxes. The watershed separating the tributaries of these two streams marks the division of Transcaucasia into a western and an eastern province.

The natural resources of the Caucasus are enormous, and hitherto little more than tapped; under an orderly and progressive government it would be one of the richest countries in the world, and as it is it offers a striking contrast to the blighted lands beyond the Turkish frontier. Every kind of cereal and vineyards flourish on both sides of the range, and Transcaucasia—the Colchis of the ancients—produces, in addition, fruit of all sorts, tobacco, cotton, tea, and other tropical plants in abundance. Immense tracts of virgin forest cover a large part of Georgia, as well as the slopes of the Caucasus, ill-preserved and neglected, but still of immense value. Besides agricul-

tural wealth, the mountains teem with precious minerals; coal exists in Georgia and in the Kuban territory, and the manganese mines of Chiatury, near Kutais, produce half the world's supply of that mineral; the Elizavetpol mountains are rich in copper, and those of Armenia in salt. Most important of all are the vast oil-fields of Baku, producing 600,000,000 puds of naphtha per annum, and other smaller fields are beginning to be developed.

But the political disorders to which the country has been a prey since the earliest beginnings of history—wars, revolutions, and brigandage—have impeded its development. Even under the ægis of Russian rule, when the land should have developed at all events as much as Poland or Central Russia, the troubles continued and progress has been slow. Nor has the administration done all that it might have done to promote the welfare of the country. The few roads are ill-kept and allowed to fall into disrepair; there are only two or three lines of railway, badly managed and insufficient; the public services are disorganized; public safety is a thing unknown. Trade has been hampered by vexatious fiscal regulations, and the influx of foreign capital is discouraged. Education has been neglected, and where the natives provided their own, actually hindered, so that the ignorance of large parts of the country is greater even than in Russia. In fact, in spite of certain elements of civilization, the Caucasus has remained for the most part a very barbarous land. Its mountainous nature and the savage character of many of the peoples inhabiting it are in part, no doubt, responsible for

this state of things; but Russia's efforts to dominate rebellious nature and rebellious man have not proved adequate to the task.

More interesting than its geographical features and material resources are the peoples of the Caucasus. In no other region of its size in the world are there so many different races and languages. Macedonia contains seven or eight nationalities, but in comparison with the Caucasus, with its fifty or sixty, it is but a poorly-stocked ethnographical museum. Since the earliest times this country has been famous as a meeting-place of many races and many tongues. Strabo tells us that there were seventy different peoples in the Caucasus; Pliny, with greater exaggeration, says that three hundred languages were spoken in the markets of Colchis. For over two thousand years the Caucasus has been in the pathway of numberless migrations of peoples; but the nature of the land was such that each people that passed left some of its members behind, some fragment which survived unchanged in secluded valleys and rocky fastnesses. Once a community was settled here it was very difficult for a new invader to expel it totally; some small part was sure to remain behind resisting all assaults, until the second invader in his turn was forced to defend himself against a third.

I shall not attempt to enter into the thorny path of Caucasian ethnography—one which has not really been properly explored even by those who are really competent, and many problems remain yet unsolved. But it is necessary to say a few words on the distribution

of the chief races in order to make certain aspects of the political situation clear. The question of the Caucasian races and their division may be regarded from several points of view. If we consider it purely in its scientific bearings, we must divide them into white races and yellow or Mongol races ; the white must then be subdivided into Indo-Europeans, Semites, and pure Caucasians, and the Mongolians into Turkish peoples and pure Mongols. This is, of course, only one method ; others may adopt a different though equally scientific system. But from a political point of view divisions of this kind are apt to be confusing, for we find Russians, Armenians, Kurds, Persians, and Tates bracketed together as Indo-Europeans ; Georgians, Lezghins, and Abkhazians united among the pure Caucasians ; and Turks and Tartars treated as a single family. From a political point of view Tartars and Tates should be bracketed together, for although of widely different racial origin, they are both Shiah Moslems and practically form one nationality. Also Russians and Armenians, although both labelled as Indo-European, are widely separated by political considerations. Moreover, certain isolated fragments of peoples, perhaps not more than a few thousand strong, may have an immense scientific importance, and yet politically be a negligible quantity. For instance, the Ossets, inhabiting the western part of the Central Caucasus, offer many interesting problems to the ethnographer and the philologist ; but they have never come to the fore in the recent political history of the country. The people of Daghestan, who are split up into several dozen different races and

countless tribes, many of them as yet unclassed and of unknown origin, although they played a great part in former times, and under Shamyl resisted the Russian advance with desperate valour, their name is seldom even mentioned in the accounts of recent events. Politically we may divide the Caucasian peoples into the following groups: Khartvels or Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, Russians, Eastern mountaineers, and Western mountaineers; the mountaineers, however, have practically no political importance at the present time.

The Khartvel or Georgian group occupies the whole of Western Transcaucasia, spreading as far east as the Alazan valley and as far south as the Turkish frontier, but its chief centres are the valleys of the Rion and the Ingur. The Georgian population numbers about 1,800,000, and they are all Orthodox Christians, except the Adjars in the mountains near Batum, who were converted to Islam. They belong to the Aryan family, but form part of a group of peoples more or less autochthonous to the land, and having very little connection with other Aryan races. Their language, although Aryan, has peculiarities which distinguish it from all other tongues, even those of other autochthonous Caucasian races, to whom, however, it is probably allied; in the course of time it has been modified by infiltration of Persian, Armenian, Turkish, Greek, and Arabic elements. The Georgians are subdivided into Georgians proper, or Khartvels (Khartlins), inhabiting the central part of the country; Kakhetins, east of Tiflis; Imeretins, round Kutais; Mingrelians, between Kutais and the sea; Gurians,

in the district of Ozurgety; Pshavs, Khevsurs, and other highlanders, in the mountains north of Tiflis and along the Georgian road; Svanets, in the mountains north of Kutais. Each of these branches has its own dialect, but of late years the various local patois have been tending to disappear and a single literary language has been universally adopted. They form the largest and most compact racial mass in the whole of Transcaucasia.

Eastern Transcaucasia is inhabited chiefly by Armenians and Tartars. The Armenians or Haiks, number 1,200,000 in Russian territory, but the greater part of this people is still in Turkey. They are apparently of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European group, and their language seems to have considerable affinity with Zend, but it contains important Semitic elements, and many Georgian, Turkish, and Persian words. The Armenians are found mostly in the Governments of Erivan, Tiflis, Elizavetpol, and Baku, but that of Erivan is the only one in which they are a majority. By religion they belong to the Gregorian Church.*

The Tartars are a Mongol people closely allied to the Ottoman Turks, and their language is a patois of Turkish. They originally came from Central Asia, and invaded the Caucasus from Azerbajan (North-Western Persia); they are, in fact, described as Azerbajan Tartars, to distinguish them from the Kazan and the Crimean Tartars. Their habitats are the governments of Baku, Elizavetpol, Erivan, and certain

* Further details concerning the Armenians and the Tartars will be given in Chapter VIII.

districts of that of Tiflis, and they number 1,200,000. They are divided into a number of tribes or clans; to them are allied the 50,000 Nogai Tartars in the Kuban and Daghestan provinces, and 100,000 Kumiks. In the Government of Baku there are also some 180,000 Tates, who, although of Iranian stock, and speaking a Persian dialect, are Shiah Mohammedans like the Tartars, and are gradually adopting Tartar ways and even the Tartar language. Here, as in other parts of the East, religion is a stronger tie than race or nationality, and practically all the Shiahs of the Eastern Caucasus are, for practical purposes, Tartars. On the other hand, the Sunni Mohammedans, whether Tartars, Turks, Lezghins, Kurds, or others, form a separate community, who, save in certain cases, have taken no part in the Armeno-Tartar feud.

Other Moslem peoples are the Turks and the Kurds, both of them Sunnis. The former number 30,000 in the province of Batum, where they are more or less assimilated to the Adjars (70,000), and 50,000, or 60,000 in the province of Kars. The Kurds are mostly nomad shepherds of the Governments of Erivan and Elizavetpol and the province of Kars.

Next we come to the highlanders. In the Western Caucasus and along the Black Sea coast are the remnants of two autochthonous peoples, of great interest to ethnographers, who once played a large *rôle* in these lands, viz., the Circassians, to whom are allied the Kabardins, and the Abkhazians. The Circassians resisted the Russian advance with

desperate valour, and when the country was finally subjugated the great majority preferred to emigrate into Turkish territory. At present there are only a few thousand Circassians left out of a gallant nation of half a million. The Abkhazians who dwell in the mountains behind Sukhum Kalé are reduced to about 60,000, and the Kabardins on the north-east slopes of the range are 190,000. The prevailing religion of these people is Islam. The Eastern mountaineers dwelling in Daghestan and part of the Terek province, are an extraordinary medley of several dozen different branches, mostly autochthonous, but many of them undetermined, and speaking numbers of different languages, whose connections with each other are not always established. The Chechens (280,000) are warlike highlanders living in the mountains south and east of Vladikavkaz. Then come the Lezghins, Andians, and Avars, the Dargo, the Kyurins, the Udins, and many others. There is one mountain in Daghestan on the slopes of which are seven villages each speaking a different language; to communicate with each other they use the Avar tongue, which is a sort of *lingua franca* of the district. Besides the native dialects Turkish and Arabic are also spoken. The Eastern highlanders are nearly all Sunni Mohammedans, and were almost welded into a single nation under the leadership of Shamyl, who held out against Russia in a long series of wars. The story of the Russian campaigns of Daghestan and Circassia is among the most romantic episodes of Muscovite history. They are still warlike and brave,

but have remained quiet during the last thirty years.

Another highland people, who cannot, however, be classed as autochthonous, are the Ossets, occupying the mountains between the Georgian road and the Adai Khokh. Their language is Iranian, and, in fact, they call themselves Iron, and many of their customs are very similar to those of the primitive peoples of Western Europe, which gave rise to curious but untenable theories as to their relationship with the Germans. They number 120,000, spread over the governments of Tiflis and Kutais and the Terek province; one half of them are nominal Christians, and the other half nominal Mohammedans, but both sections practise pagan rites.

Finally, we come to the Russians, who, although not an absolute majority, are the largest element of the population, and are, of course, the ruling race. They number about 3,000,000, but with the exception of some 150,000 they are all in the Northern Caucasus. In Transcaucasia they are merely soldiers, officials, small peasant colonies (chiefly sectarians) and a certain number of workmen at Baku, Tiflis, and Batum. In the Northern Caucasus the majority of them are in the Cossack colonies of the Terek and the Kuban. Other races are: Greeks (55,000), some of them descended from the ancient Greek colonies on the Black Sea, a few thousand German colonists, Jews, Poles, &c.

To sum up, we may divide the peoples of the Caucasus as follows:—

Russians	3,000,000, or 30 per cent.	approx.
Georgians	1,800,000, or 20 ,,	
Shiah Moslems ...	1,300,000, or 13 ,,	
Sunni Moslems ...	1,500,000, or 15 ,,	
Gregorian Armenians	1,200,000, or 12½ ,,	
Total ...	9,248,695	

To attempt to write the history of the Caucasus would not only be very difficult, but hardly profitable. Until the Russian occupation the Caucasus had no unity. Geographically it is divided into two distinct parts by the great range. Ethnographically it is but a collection of miscellaneous samples. Historically it has always been split up between a number of different foreign States, and more or less independent principalities and tribes. Alexander the Great, the East Roman Empire, and the Arabs at various times laid claim to rule the whole country, but in practice they never actually did so. Russia is the first Power which has succeeded in uniting these scattered fragments. At the time of the Russian conquest Western Transcaucasia was divided into the kingdoms of Georgia, Imeretia, and Mingrelia, which had at an earlier period formed a single State. The Eastern provinces (Baku, Elizavetpol, and Erivan) were under Persian supremacy; Batum and Kars belonged to Turkey, who also had a nominal suzerainty over the Circassians. The mountain ranges were divided among a number of practically independent clans. This state of things had existed in a more or less modified form for several centuries, and in the wildly chaotic conditions of the country frontiers were un-

certain and sovereign rights but vain things. The only part of the Caucasus which had a more or less consecutive national history was the kingdom of Georgia.

A Georgian or Iberian State had existed long before the Christian era, but very little is known of its history. The country received its first lessons in civilization from the Greek traders who established commercial colonies in Colchis, the fabled land of the Golden Fleece. In the III. century B.C., Alexander the Great conquered Iberia and established a Macedonian administration. But a national hero, Pharnabazes, led the people to revolt, expelled the Macedonian Governor, and founded a Georgian dynasty. Subsequently the rights of his successors were disputed by the Armenian Arsakid dynasty, and in the IV. century King Mirian founded the Sasanid house. During his reign Georgia was converted to Christianity by St. Nina. The Greek Emperor sent a bishop and priests to Georgia and the king and people were baptized in 332. Christianity was not, however, firmly established for some time, and in the V. century there was a religious war between the Christians and the fire-worshippers supported by the Persians. King Vakhtang Gorgoslan (446–499) completed the conversion of Georgia and expelled the fire-worshippers; in spite of frequent inroads by the Persians and the highlanders, Georgia now became a considerable Power in the Middle East. In 458 the first Georgian bishopric was founded, that of Mtzkhet, and in 542 the Emperor Justinian recognized the independence of the Iberian Church, whose primate was henceforth

styled Katholikos. In the VII. century the Arabs invaded Georgia, and the ancient kingdom was split up into several principalities. Kakhetia seceded in the east, Imeretia, Mingrelia, and Abkhazia in the west, so that the then reigning dynasty of the Bagratids only ruled the country round Tiflis, under Arab auspices, and Tiflis itself was held by the Arabs. Under David (1001) and Bagrat III. Georgia was reunited once more into an independent kingdom, but soon after it was invaded by the Seljuk Turks, who laid it waste.

David III. (1080), the Renovator, at last succeeded in expelling the Mohammedans and creating a new and greater Georgian kingdom, extending from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and from the Caucasus to Kars. He reorganized the country, suppressed brigandage and heresy, built churches, opened schools, and made Georgia a centre of culture and civilization. In 1184 the celebrated Queen Thamara came to the throne—a name still venerated as a glorious if half-legendary tradition wherever the Georgian tongue is spoken. Almost every church and every castle is attributed to her, and a whole host of legends has gathered about her personality. She does seem to have been a great woman, and to have raised her country to a high place among nations. She waged war successfully against both the Turks and the Greeks, and after the fall of the Byzantine Empire at the hands of the Crusaders she helped to form the Empire of Trebizond. But at her death in 1212 the edifice, laboriously raised, crumbled once more. Her incapable successors were unable to resist the

ever-recurring onslaughts of the Moslems from the south and the highlanders from the north. First Genghis Khan's Mongol hordes, then the Persians, then again in 1236, the Mongols raided Georgia and made themselves for a time masters of the country. For the next three hundred years it is a prey to invasion, civil war, and Mongol oppression. In 1387 and 1393 it suffered at the hands of Timur the Tartar, who desolated the land with fire and sword. The XV. and XVI. centuries are one long record of Turkish and Persian invasions and occupations, as a result of which several of the native princes became Moslems, and Oriental customs penetrated into the country. Massacre, bloodshed, treachery, and cruelty are the staple elements of Georgian history during this period, lit up at rare intervals by flashes of heroism and sublime patriotism. The Persians were now the real rulers of Georgia, but they usually delegated their authority to native kings of proven fidelity. Some of these honestly tried to better the conditions of the people, and aspired to ultimate independence. One of them, Vakhtang VI. (1675–1737), although outwardly professing Islam—to which fact he owed his nomination as King of Georgia by the Persians—managed to re-establish a measure of order in the land, to unite the scattered provinces, and to promote an intellectual revival. It was in his reign that relations with Russia were first established, for with the help of the Muscovite Tzars he hoped to shake himself free of Persia and obtain protection from his various dangerous neighbours. The Moslem Powers, by

their perpetual incursions and their savage oppression, threw the Christians of the Caucasus into the arms of Russia and led to their own eventual downfall. In 1722 Peter the Great concluded an alliance with Vakhtang, with a view to the expedition to Derbent and Baku. In the following year the Georgian king openly declared himself independent of Persia, and sent an army of 30,000 to assist the Russians. But to his surprise and dismay Peter concluded a separate peace treaty with Persia in 1724, acknowledging the latter's suzerainty over Georgia. Thus left to herself Georgia was overrun by hordes of Turks and Persians who came to wreak their vengeance on her for having helped their enemy. The highlanders profited by the enfeebled state of the country to pour down into the valleys and plunder the inhabitants. Revolts broke out, and Vakhtang was deposed and died in exile in 1737. The object of Russia was so to weaken Georgia that its absorption into the Empire should become inevitable, and this policy was consistently followed for nearly a century, and with ultimate success. Catherine II. instructed her agents and generals in the Caucasus "to do nothing likely to strengthen Georgia."

In 1736 Nadir Shah had succeeded to the Persian throne, and was friendly to the Georgians. He freed the country from the Turks, and eventually placed Irakli II. on the throne. Irakli (1744–1798) was one of the most remarkable men of his time, and excited the admiration of all Europe; under him Georgia revived and prospered, and became for the last time

a powerful and independent State. Culture and civilization spread, order and unity were achieved, and the neighbouring Tartar khanates reduced to vassalage; Imeretia, however, remained a separate kingdom under King Solomon. On the death of Nadir Shah Persia fell into a state of anarchy and civil war, and Irakli declared himself independent. But the Turkish danger became menacing once more, and the two Georgian missions to Joseph II. of Austria, asking for help against the Sultan, having failed, Irakli was persuaded to ally himself with Russia in 1769, as that Power was meditating a new Turkish campaign in which Austria promised to take part. War was declared, and the Russo-Georgian armies met the Turks near Akhaltzykh, but Irakli, like Vakhtang, was left in the lurch by his treacherous allies, who retired from the field of battle. By a superhuman effort he succeeded in defeating the Turks single-handed; but they soon returned in greater force, and Persian hordes, under the ferocious Aga Mohammed Khan, also poured into the unhappy land. Again Georgia was fearfully devastated, and in 1795 the capital Tiflis was burnt and captured by the Persians. Irakli managed to recapture the city a short time afterwards and expel the Persians from the country, but he was weakened and broken, and in 1798 he died. His son and successor, George XIII., entered into negotiations with Persia, but the Tzar Paul outbid the Shah, and in 1799 a Russo-Georgian treaty was concluded and confirmed in the following year. By its provisions King George, the magnates, the clergy, and the people of Georgia declared that

they wished to become Russian subjects; but the crown was to be vested in George and his heirs, who were to retain the chief authority in the country but without legislative powers; the people were to enjoy immunity from taxation for twelve years; the number of Russian troops in Georgia was not to exceed 6,000, and military service for the Georgians was to take the form of a national militia; the Georgian Church was to be independent; and Georgian was to remain the official and educational language. This is how the treaty was observed. On the death of George his son, Prince David, succeeded, and was waiting to be confirmed; but in the spring of 1802 General Knorring entered Tiflis with a Russian army. On May 8th he summoned the nobles to hear the Tzar's manifesto read in the Sion Cathedral. Every one expected merely that the treaty of 1800 would be confirmed; but the manifesto declared instead that the Russian administration was to be introduced "for the good of the country," and that an oath of allegiance was expected of the Georgian magnates. This they indignantly refused, and they were about to return to their homes when they found themselves surrounded by troops outside the church. A great uproar followed, and some rioting; David was deposed, and a number of prominent Georgians were arrested. The Russians treated Georgia like a conquered country, the officials and officers beat and ill-used the natives, and outraged their women. The result was that risings broke out in various districts, the people refused to pay taxes, and David was approached by a deputation of Georgians and Armenians who

West Caucasian Types, near Batum.

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offered to organize a general revolution ; but he refused, from fear of the Russians, and was eventually sent to live in Russia. The state of the country, however, became so alarming that the Government decided on a more conciliatory policy. Prince Tsitsiani, a Georgian noble of high rank related to the Royal house, was appointed Governor-General, and commissioned to introduce an aristocratic constitution on a national basis. This was done, and for some years Georgia enjoyed a more or less native and moderately liberal government. Freed from the danger of Mohammedan and highland raids, the people developed, commerce prospered, and literature and culture revived. It seemed as though the country would become one of the most loyal and peaceful as well as one of the most progressive provinces of the Empire.

But under Nicholas I. reaction set in, the censorship became more severe, and the Government tended to curtail the privileges of the people. This produced discontent, and led to the conspiracy of 1832, which was discovered before it had time to achieve anything, and numbers of Georgians of the best families were imprisoned or exiled. Gradually every vestige of constitutional government was suppressed, even the Church was placed under the control of the Russian Holy Synod and a Russian appointed Exarch, and the country reduced to the status of a conquered province once more. Universal military service was introduced, and although it was never applied in its full rigour throughout the Caucasus, Georgians were sent to serve in Russian regiments in Europe and Siberia, while Russian army corps were quartered in

Georgia. Russian became the official language, everything was done to expel the Georgian tongue from the schools, and an attempt made to Russify the country still further by settling Russian colonies in Transcaucasia.

To-day the Caucasus forms a Viceroyalty divided into twelve provinces (seven *gubernii*, or governments, and five *oblasti*, or military territories) governed like any other part of the Russian Empire, with the same type of administration and the same bureaucratic machinery. But as in certain other frontier regions, the Governor-General or Viceroy has authority over the provincial governors, and even wider powers than those of ordinary Russian governors, and the *zemstva*, or elective provincial councils, have not been introduced, although there are elective municipal councils. A further difference is that the personnel of the bureaucracy is even worse than that of European Russia. According to a secret document of the police department, which was shown to me, during the period 1894–1898 the following officials were convicted of robbery, peculation, murder, and other crimes, and punished: 19 district governors (*Uyezdnye Nachalniki*), 9 assistant governors, 83 *pristavi* (police commissioners), and two town chiefs of police! If these were actually punished one may be quite sure that a far larger number committed crimes which remained unpunished.

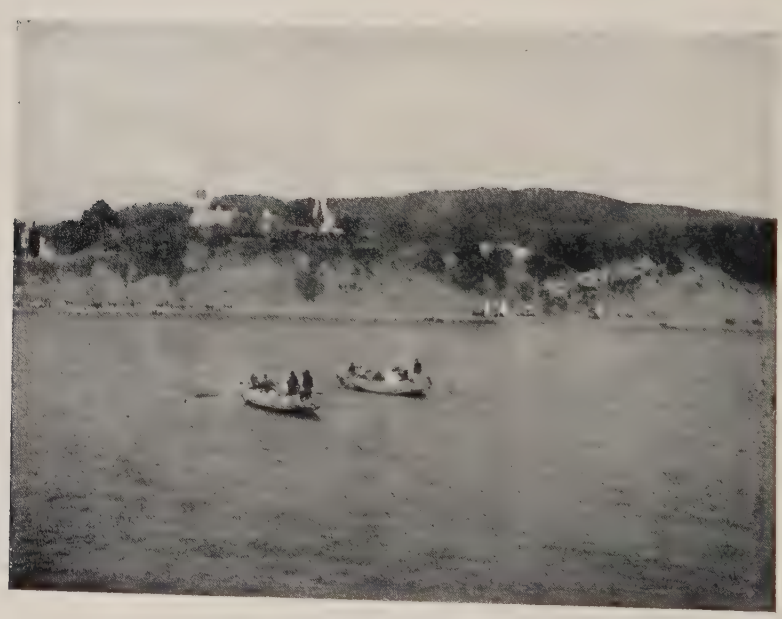
Russia does not distinguish between the various levels of civilization, nor between racial and religious differences. In theory the Empire is one and indivisible, and every one has the same rights (or absence of rights) and the same duties, except in the case of the Poles and the Jews who are in

a position of exceptional disability, and of the Finns who, until a few years back, enjoyed a wide measure of autonomy which they have recently regained. The Russians have none of that feeling of racial superiority over their non-Russian subjects, even when the latter are of a different religion and colour, such as the English feel with regard to the natives of India. A Georgian, an Armenian, an Osset, even a Tartar or a Persian may aspire to the highest ranks in the army or the bureaucracy. Russian soldiers, officers, and officials have no repugnance to serving under a non-Russian chief, whether he be white, brown, or yellow, Christian or Mohammedan. Thus we find Georgian generals like Prince Chavchavadze and Prince Orbeliani, Armenian generals like Lazareff, Loris Melikoff, Argutinsky, and Tergukassoff, Tartar generals like Alikhanoff Avarsky, Georgian governors like Tsitsiani and Nakashidze, not to mention many officers and civil servants of lower rank. Nor is there even any objection to non-Russians receiving appointments among peoples of their own race. Socially, too, they are treated as equals, and Georgian, Tartar, and Armenian magnates are received in the highest circles of Russian society, and even intermarry with the Russian aristocracy, although intermarriage does not occur between Christians and Mohammedans. But in order to obtain these advantages, a native of the Caucasus must conform with Russian ideas and become more or less Russified, and almost forget his own nationality, not because the Russian is a chauvinist, but because he suspects the loyalty of every one who is not a Russian in sentiment if not by race.

Consequently, efforts are made to introduce Russian as the general language of the Caucasus, and to discourage non-Russian schools in every way. Nor do the Russian officials ever trouble to learn the native languages of the provinces they are sent to govern. With regard to religion, the Georgian Church has been incorporated in that of Russia; the Armenian Church has remained independent, but has been placed under strict Government tutelage, and the Mussulman religion is also controlled by Government's right of nominating the higher clergy.

Yet after a century of Russian rule, with more or less strongly accentuated Russifying tendencies, in spite of the spread of the Russian tongue and of Russian ideas and customs, and the supremacy of Russian bureaucratic methods, the Caucasus, or at least Transcaucasia, has certainly not become Russian. The Georgians, the Armenians, the Tartars, and many of the minor nationalities, civilized or barbarous, Christian or Mohammedan, peaceful or warlike, have preserved their languages and their racial characteristics intact, and in many cases are imbued with strong nationalist feelings. There is no hatred of the Russians such as there is in Poland, or such as there was in Italy against Austria, but there is a grim resolution to preserve language, nationality, and religion against all attacks, and at all events among the more civilized elements, a determination to put an end once and for all to Muscovite autocracy and bureaucracy. If the Caucasus is to continue to form part of the Russian Empire—and for the present it is impossible to see how it can be anything else— it can only be governed on a basis of popular autonomy.

Gagry on the Black Sea. Hotel and Villa of the Prince of Oldenburg.



Ardiler on the Black Sea Coast.

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CHAPTER II

EASTWARD HO!

I HAD left Russia in November, 1904; I recrossed the frontier at Alexandrovo in August, 1905. When I quitted the country nine months previously the war in the Far East was at its height, the Russian Government, although shaken and weakened in its prestige, still controlled the situation, and despotism held almost undisputed sway. But Von Plehve was no longer Minister of the Interior, and his successor, Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky took the first tentative steps on the path of reform. Yet no one suspected that revolution was so near, and that Russia was soon to be a prey to anarchy. The next few months witnessed many startling changes. In the Far East things went from bad to worse; defeat followed defeat, the Baltic fleet had ceased to exist, and the Manchurian army was weakened by disease and demoralized by failure. At home, the various progressive groups, from the mildest constitutionalists to the reddest revolutionists were growing daily bolder and more exacting in their demands; many concessions had been extorted from an unwilling autocracy, the press enjoyed a certain measure of

freedom, riots and strikes were becoming more and more frequent, and from one end of the Empire to the other the cry for liberty was increasing in volume and insistence.

One of the most startling aspects of the Russian situation at that time was the uprising of the subject peoples, and the revival of nationalism in Poland, in Finland, in the Caucasus. The policy of the Russifying steam-roller had failed, and the oppressed nations who had been ordered by *ukaz* to become Russians, whose Churches had been persecuted, whose languages had been proscribed, were now taking advantage of the weakness of the Government to claim their rights.

Otherwise the conditions were somewhat quieter, and tens of thousands of Russians who had fled the country in a panic were now beginning to return. The Friedrichstrasse Station at Berlin was crowded with Russians, and on the Warsaw train one heard nearly as much Russian spoken as German. On reaching the frontier the Customs examination was of the most cursory nature; the vast piles of luggage were looked at by the *douaniers* as though it were no concern of theirs, and we were hurried back to our cars. In the restaurant I noticed a typical sign of the times, viz., that the attendants professed to understand no Russian, and only replied when addressed either in Polish, French, or German. A language strike on the Warsaw-Vienna railway was then in progress to protest against the old ordinance making Russian compulsory for all State officials.

At Warsaw, the first sight to greet my eyes was a police cart bearing the body of a murdered

gendarme. The assassinations of policemen were then matters of daily occurrence to which no one paid much attention. The streets were patrolled ceaselessly, day and night, and the famous, or infamous, Don Cossacks were most conspicuous. Otherwise Warsaw had little that was of interest to offer, so after a few days' stay I continued my eastward journey.

From Warsaw to Odessa is a 26 hours' run by the excellent trains of the South-Western Railway. One of my travelling companions is a young landed proprietor from the government of Kherson; we have hardly exchanged half a dozen words before he plunges into politics—a thing which would certainly not have occurred at this time last year. He is an enthusiastic Liberal, and the new Constitution just promulgated by the Tzar he regards as a mere farce. "We want something much wider than that, much more democratic. We want no 'German' Constitution which will leave all real power in the hands of the Tzar." But he is also an ardent chauvinist, and although he disapproves of the war in the Far East, he is convinced that fifty years of liberalism will make Russia the first nation in the world. "We must have an exit from the Black Sea; we shall annex Constantinople and all the Balkan States, and perhaps India. If Germany opposes us we shall destroy her."

As we travel southwards the heat increases, and the single small window admits very little air. At Odessa all is quiet, and there are hardly any visible traces of the June riots, for all the damage has been quickly repaired. Although further disturbances were not

generally expected, a foreign resident told me that he regarded an outburst of anti-Semitism as inevitable at no distant date. The air was full of peace and rumours of peace, and the conclusion of the war was momentarily awaited.

In the evening I boarded the steamer *Tzesarevich Georgii* of the Russian Company, and at 7 p.m. we set sail for Batum. The journey is one of the most beautiful coasting trips in the world. The steamer is a large, comfortable, well-appointed boat with spacious cabins, a wide promenade deck, and a first-rate cuisine. We are fairly crowded as far as Yalta, for it is the height of the season in that smart watering-place. At ten the next morning after a smooth crossing we reach Sevastopol, where the famous Black Sea fleet rides at anchor. The *Knyaz Potemkin* is in the inner harbour, almost dismantled. No one then imagined that a second and more serious mutiny would break out so soon, which was to reduce the whole fleet to a state of impotence. Many more passengers come on board, all of them bound for Yalta, and for the next few hours the ship is quite a "congested district." The lovely coast-line is looking its very best in the perfect summer weather, and Yalta is brilliant. The quays and public gardens are thronged with gay crowds of fashionably dressed people, the hotels and restaurants are full, smart equipages are dashing up and down, and brass bands are playing, for all the world as though wars and revolutions were forgotten. The charming villas are all occupied, and as night falls the whole scene is lit up by the blaze of myriads of electric lights, like a city of fairy-

land. Yet even Yalta has had its *bunt*,* not so very long ago, when houses and shops were pillaged and burnt and several people killed or wounded. But all that is long past, and for a few weeks the country was enjoying the sense of relief and the hope of better times.

At nine we steam out of the harbour, almost all the passengers having landed. We follow the Crimean coast through the night, and the next morning spend a few hours at Feodosia; then across the bay to Novorossiisk, which we reach late at night. The weather continues perfect; the sea is as calm as a lake, and although the sun is hot, soft breezes waft across the deck and keep us cool even in the middle of the day. At night we are lulled to sleep by the gentle lapping of the water against the vessel's side. The few passengers are fairly representative of Caucasian travel. There is a Russian lady of German extraction, who speaks several languages excellently, has considerable culture and a most agreeable conversation, and although she has only been out of Russia once in her life, she is in touch with the intellectual movements of Western Europe; she proves to be the headmistress of a girl's high school at Tiflis, and is altogether a type of the best class of Russian intellectual. Then there is an Armenian lady, also from Tiflis; she, too, is a very good linguist, and has been educated in Germany. She is returning home after a short summer outing, but hopes to leave for Europe soon, for the terrible times which the Armenians of the Caucasus are passing through make her wish to

* Revolutionary outbreak.

get away from the scenes of horror. Her cousin, a little boy of twelve, is a characteristic Armenian type, and his white sailor suit brings out the darkness of his complexion. There is a young Russian officer just returned from Manchuria, a tall, sad-faced man, bearing traces of sickness; he is now on his way to Abbas Tuman, where he hopes that the high air and the waters will restore his shattered health. Some other officers on board (who have not been to Manchuria) object to the peace negotiations and are all for continuing the war, confident in the inevitable triumph of Russian arms. A Danish man of business, a Jewish commercial traveller on his way from Odessa to Baku, a couple of Orthodox priests, and two or three other people make up the list of cabin passengers.

In the third class there is a still more varied miscellany of types and costumes: Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Georgians, Russians, Jews, and almost every other race of the Near and Middle East are represented. The sailors, too, are of many nationalities, but the language of the ship is Russian; curiously enough one can detect in the maritime jargon a number of Italian nautical expressions, such as *vira*, *maina*, *issa*, *bandiera*, &c.; they are survivals of the days when the sea-borne trade of the Euxine was wholly in the hands of the Genoese and Venetians, when the proud triremes of the Italian sea republics made annual voyages to Kaffa (Feodosia) and Tana (Azoff), and flourishing Italian settlements arose in all the most favoured spots of the coast.

From Novorossiisk to Batum we are almost always

in sight of land, a voyage of some thirty-eight hours, broken by many stoppages. It is a marvellous coast, grander and more beautiful than that of the Crimea, and far wilder. Range upon range of mountains rise up from the water's edge, clothed with rich tropical vegetation and magnificent forests. Here and there, on clear days, some snowy peak of the western spurs of the Caucasus appears among the masses of cloud. This coast-land, fenced off from Europe by the giant barrier of the Caucasus, is one of the most beautiful and fertile regions of the earth's surface. But for the past forty years it has been almost deserted. A territory of some 7,350 square kilometres contains barely 65,000 inhabitants, of whom 25,000 are in the town of Novorossiisk and 8,000 in Sukhum. Before 1864 the country was populated by several hundred thousand Circassians, formerly an independent community under a vague Turkish protectorate. They were the last people to hold out against the Russians, and were famed as a most warlike, vigorous, chivalrous, and handsome race. Mohammedans by religion, although preserving many pagan practices, they fought with desperate valour against the invaders. When at last the Russian troops had occupied the whole country, the Circassians could not reconcile themselves to the new conditions, and emigrated into Turkish territory. The story of that emigration is a terrible one, for nearly half of the 400,000 Circassians died of privation; those who finally reached Turkey became one of the most turbulent elements of the population. The efforts of the Russian Government to resettle the country have proved almost fruitless,

and malaria devastates the whole coast, which is one of the unhealthiest regions in the world. Russia conquered the country after a series of desperate struggles and sacrifices, "but Nature," in the words of a French traveller, "has got the upper hand over the Russians." Some 30,000 Circassians remained behind; a few thousand Russian peasants and officials have been planted in isolated settlements along the coast—miserable villages in the midst of nature's wealth and beauty—to die of fever. Only a small part of the territory is cultivated; a couple of Grand Dukes and some wealthy nobles have undertaken agricultural experiments with moderate success, the great monastic establishment of Novy Afon (New Athos) has cultivated a large estate, and at Gagry the Prince of Oldenburg has founded a new seaside resort, with hotels and gardens. From the steamer this place looks very beautiful and attractive, nestling amidst splendid forests coming down to the water's edge, while a deep, mysterious valley penetrates far inland; but hitherto the venture has not been successful, for malaria and bad communications keep away intending travellers. The great coast road from Novorossiisk to Sukhum, which has been built at vast expense through virgin forests and across a thousand torrents, is always in need of repair. The absence of bridges makes it impassable for a great part of the year, and engineers and workmen die by hundreds of fever. The exiled Circassians have indeed been revenged by the fever, which keeps watch and ward over their ancient homes and deals death to the foreign intruder.

"The Land of the Golden Fleece." The Mouth of the Rion.

Mingrelian Carts at Poti.

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On the morning of the fourth day we are off the coast of the land of Colchis, and the mountains now recede some distance from the sea. We soon reach Poti, at the mouth of the Rion (the Phasis of the ancients), which here forms a marshy estuary. Poti was fairly important before the Russian occupation of Batum, and the Transcaucasian railway had its terminus there. But the harbour was a bad one, and the large steamers only touched at Batum, so that passengers from the interior had to travel by a small steamer from the railway terminus to the Turkish port. Since 1878 trade has gradually shifted to Batum, which is now in railway connection with Tiflis, and Poti, on account of its great unhealthiness, was almost abandoned. But within the last few years the town has been reviving; it is still a God-forsaken, poisonous place, surrounded by mosquito-ridden swamps and stinking pools, but owing to the energy of the mayor, M. Nikoladze, great harbour works have been undertaken, and the marshes are being slowly drained. In a few years' time it will rival Batum, and already the improvements have been so successful that a great deal of the traffic which left Batum on account of the strikes and disorders has been transferred to Poti once more.

CHAPTER III

BATUM

EARLY in the afternoon we are in sight of Batum, which offers a most beautiful prospect. The magnificent bay is surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills clad with rich vegetation of the most exquisite velvety green. Northwards stretches the marshy plain of the Rion, beyond which we may catch a glimpse of the Caucasus ; to the south and east are the wild Adjar mountains, purple, blue, and pink, extending to the Turkish border and beyond, while the Anatolian mountains jut out into the sea in numerous rocky headlands, hazy and indistinct. Batum itself is on the flat and built round the harbour. Seen from the ship it is a cluster of white and brown houses alternated with masses of tropical plants. A few ships are in the port, very few, for the town has been in an almost continual state of unrest ever since March, and trade is almost dead. The bay is naturally the finest port on this coast, and the great works carried out by the Russians have made it a really fine harbour.

The territory of Batum, together with that of Kars, constitutes the last acquisitions made by Russia in the

Batum. Mohammedans Returning from the Mosque after Prayers.

The "Tzesarevich Georgii" at Poti.

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Caucasus, having been assigned to her at the Berlin Treaty of 1878 as some reward for her victorious, but otherwise sterile, campaign. The Russian attack on Batum during the war had failed, while the operations in European Turkey were successful; at Berlin what she had gained in the Balkans was taken from her and Batum given to her instead. But it was only handed over under certain restrictive conditions; it was to remain a free port outside the Russian Customs barrier, and it was not to be fortified. The object of these limitations was to safeguard foreign commercial interests in the Black Sea, and to ward off the danger that Russia should make a formidable naval base on the very borders of Turkey. The importance of Batum for Russia lay in the fact that it was then the only good harbour in Transcaucasia.

The conditions imposed by the Powers were of an unnatural kind, and such as could not bear the strain of circumstances. It was unnatural that Russia should not want to fortify such an important frontier position as Batum, and it was not in the least likely that either Turkey or the other Powers would go to war with her for doing so. Consequently, in the early 'eighties Russia began to erect forts in the neighbourhood of the town, but outside the free port zone. Then other forts were built, but not armed, even within that zone. Finally, just as the Government had declared in 1870 that it no longer held itself bound by the provision of the Treaty of Paris forbidding it to have a war fleet in the Black Sea, so now it issued a note to the Powers in defiance of the Berlin Treaty, stating that Batum would be fortified,

and that as a fortress it could not continue to be a free port. The inner forts were thereupon armed, and the town became a stronghold of the first rank, which would serve as a base of operations in case of war in the Black Sea.

My first impression on landing at Batum was that I was really in Turkey, not in Russia. There are Russian buildings no doubt, Russian inscriptions, Russian uniforms. There is the dirt and the untidiness and the unfinished appearance of things, which is a characteristic common both to Russia and Turkey. But there is something more than all this; the feeling in the air is Turkish, the strange collection of swarthy Oriental faces, the picturesque rags, and the scarlet fezzes recall the harbours of the Turkish Levant. Russian disorder consists in not finishing things, and in neglecting essentials while devoting attention to externals; Turkish disorder does not even begin things, and neglects externals quite as much as essentials. The noise and confusion of the crowd of porters, all picturesque and all villainous-looking, are also thoroughly Turkish, for in Russia proper they manage these things better, and passengers are landed from trains or steamers more comfortably and with less fuss. The cab which conveys me to the hotel is Russian, for it is far less dilapidated than a Turkish vehicle would be, and it has the supreme glory of rubber tires. The rubber tire is a form of civilization which has penetrated deep into the Caucasus. In the remotest towns of Transcaucasia, where clean hotels, insectless beds, decent food, schools, roads, security, and every

other necessity or luxury of modern life are lacking, the rubber tire flourishes. My hotel plunges me again into Turkey. The French-speaking interpreter of doubtful antecedents, the gaily-coloured Oriental rugs, the bedsteads of painted iron, and the broken-down furniture might have belonged to a hostelry at Üsküb or Salonika.

The great feature of Batum is the boulevard. Every Russian town of any size has some sort of public garden or park, called the boulevard, or the *Alexandrovsky Sad* (Alexander Garden), or the *Gorodskoy Sad* (Town Garden), where the band plays and people walk up and down. Most of these places of recreation in provincial cities are dreary, ill-kept, unattractive enclosures, with untidy flowerless beds and consumptive-looking trees. But at Batum the boulevard is a thing of beauty and wonderment. It is a broad avenue flanked by acacias, palms, cactus, bananas, and other tropical plants, as well as trees of the temperate zone, and one enjoys from it a fine view of the waters of the Euxine, deep-hued as indigo, cut by ranges of fairy headlands and promontories. The gorgeous colouring, rich green, deep blue, and glowing purple, the steamy, oppressive air compose a thoroughly Eastern atmosphere. Beyond the avenue the boulevard expands into a more elaborate garden, with rare trees, strange tropical flowers, and masses of heathery, waving grasses. At the end is a little lake cut off from the open sea by a narrow strip of land. At sunset its waters are of the most exquisite shimmering gold and rose red, over which thickly-leaved trees

bend down, casting deep shadows on the metallic surface which they seem to kiss; reeds of every form and colour rise up to meet them; tall, slender palm-trees stand out black against the sky-line in the background, and along the dividing strip of sand figures of mounted Cossacks are seen riding in single file to water their horses. The whole spectacle recalls pictures of India or of Egypt, no less brilliant in hue, no less intense in atmosphere. The air is heavy and reeking with damp. Everything is wet and clammy to the touch; steamy vapours exude from plants and pools, and one feels weary, exhausted, and lacking in energy. There ride the Cossacks, symbols of Russian power, while its deadliest enemy in the Caucasus is buzzing over the water—the fever-breeding mosquito.

The Russian Government has done much to improve the climate of Batum, to drain the marshes, to make the town healthy. Health stations have been established at Zeliony Muis and other spots above the marsh zone, and quinine has been imported by the ton, but Batum is still feverish, and all the inhabitants are sooner or later affected by the poison. By the port one breathes in all the foul smells of the East, and open sewers pursue their slimy course from the houses to the sea.

Before the Russian occupation Batum was a wretched village, inhabited chiefly by Turks, with an admixture of Greeks and other Levantines. Now it is a town of 30,000 souls, still more mixed as to race and religion. Some 10,000 Turks have remained behind, the greater part of whom are subjects of the

Sultan; there are some 10,000 Georgians—Gurians, Mingrelians, Imeretins, Mohammedan Adjars; 7,000 Russians (chiefly soldiers and officials), and 3,000 to 5,000 Persians, Greeks, Armenians, Tartars, &c. But a large part of the population is fluctuating. Gurian peasants come into town when there is a demand for labour and obtain employment in various industries, which they abandon and return to their fields in the harvest season, or when work is slack. Few towns present such a collection of different specimens of humanity, from the swarthy Persian to the blond Russian. In all seaports of the Levant the ruffianly element is conspicuous, but Batum almost takes the palm for rascality of all descriptions. Murders, robbery, incendiarism have always been common occurrences here; the most extraordinary stories are told of crimes committed even by persons of the upper classes, and not a square mile of the country round is really free from brigandage. To maintain order among such people is no easy task, but Russia has certainly failed in it signally. In Turkish times the disorders were due to an insufficiency of troops and police, and the inefficiency of the administration; but now the number of troops is large, for Batum is a first-class fortress with batteries in the middle of the town, the police is numerous and well armed, the administration, if corrupt and incapable, is certainly an improvement on that of Turkey; yet public order has been going steadily from bad to worse, until the recent political disturbances reduced the town and district to a state of absolute chaos—an expression to which I shall have to resort frequently.

The prosperity of Batum is based on its position as an emporium for the export trade from the Caucasus, and on its industries. The latter are an offshoot of the Baku oil trade, and consist in a number of large case oil works. The oil is transported from Baku by rail or by means of a pipe line; and at Batum it is either shipped on to tank steamers or put into cases for export. The manufacture of these cases is a very elaborate undertaking, and constitutes an important trade. The largest works are those of Messrs. Rothschild, who, as owners of large oil-fields at Baku, are of course greatly interested in the export business. Their factory, situated outside Batum, employed several thousand men.

The workmen, as I said before, were mostly Gurians, from the district of Ozurgety, and also other groups of Georgians. Of late years the Social Democratic party has been pursuing its propaganda most actively and made many converts among the Batum working classes. Since the general state of unrest in Russia spread to the Caucasus, Batum has been a perfect hotbed of revolt. Early in the spring of 1905 the workmen of the port and of the factories went out on strike, demanding higher wages and shorter hours. But as a matter of fact, the wages in the case oil works are exceptionally high, the men earning as much as from two to three roubles a day, which is higher than the salary of any other class of workmen in Russia. Messrs. Rothschild's manager said to me, in connection with this question: "Le caractère de cette grêve c'est qu'elle n'en est pas une."

Like the first St. Petersburg strikes it was purely a manifestation of the general state of unrest of the country, and the demands of the strikers had political aspirations in the background. But unlike the strikers in St. Petersburg, those of Batum at once proceeded to violent measures, and from that day to this the town has not had a moment's real quiet. When I arrived things were peaceable enough in appearance ; although the state of siege was in force there were no patrols, and hardly any policemen. Yet not a day passed without murders being committed in the streets, and no murderer was ever arrested. A terrorist committee existed, not ascribed to any definite party, but more or less connected both with the Socialists and the Social Revolutionists, recruited from the dregs of the people, which enforced its rule by means of assassination. In one of the suburbs of Batum, where a number of the most disorderly elements live, there was a man described as the real Governor of Batum, as distinguished from the official Russian Governor : his authority seemed to be considerable, and his word was obeyed as law. The methods by which the terrorists act are extremely simple. Orders will suddenly be issued that the workmen of such and such a factory must strike ; the men obey without a murmur, and any manager or employee who attempts to stop the movement is assassinated. In some cases ruffians went on board steamers in the port and ordered the dock labourers to cease work at 3 p.m., and although the ruffians in question were absolutely unauthorized no one dared disobey them. In the town itself the terror

was so great that the least sound or appearance of disturbance caused an immediate panic.

One afternoon I was taken to see the Rothschild case oil works outside Batum. We went by petroleum launch across the bay, that way being safer than the carriage road. The works had been lying idle for months, and there was no prospect of their being started again in the near future. All the latest machinery and the most perfect plant had been set up, but was silent and useless. A guard of Cossacks was encamped in the enclosure, but even this was not considered sufficient protection, and a private guard had been organized and armed by the firm—with the full permission of the Russian Government. This concession, the manager informed me, was in itself a proof of the utter impotence of the bureaucracy, for unless they had felt their authority to have completely gone they would never have granted what even the French Government refused when, at the time of the Anarchist outrages in Paris, Baron Rothschild's life had been threatened, and he wished to form a private bodyguard for his own protection. Tall natives, mostly Adjar Mohammedans, armed with revolvers and *kinjals* (Caucasian knives) were standing about at all the entrances, and a group of Cossacks in very untidy *déshabille* were squatting on the ground playing cards outside the stable where their horses were quartered. Here and there a few workmen were seen looking after the machinery and the stores. But in spite of all these precautions no less than eighteen employees of the firm had been assassinated during the last few months, and the lives of all the

Batum. Cossacks on Guard at the Black Sea and Caspian Naphtha and Trading Company's Case Oil Works.

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others had been threatened and often attempted. The ex-workmen either did not wish to return to work or did not dare, for the terrorist committee would not have hesitated to burn or blow up the establishment with dynamite.

It is not easy to understand what the object of the revolutionary parties is, unless it be that of making the government of the country impossible until reforms are granted. But while the leaders, especially in the great towns of Russia proper, may have more or less precise ideas on the subject, the masses understand nothing save the fear of the terrorists, and the possibility of plunder. All discipline has become relaxed, all authority is flouted. The Government did absolutely nothing save occasionally exasperate the people by some act of monstrous stupidity or bad faith. It seemed incredible that in a town fortified like Batum, surrounded by batteries bristling with guns, and garrisoned by large bodies of troops, murder and outrage should be so easy. No attempt was made to arrest the guilty, and in fact the word seemed to have been passed that the revolutionists should be left alone.

A curious instance of the Government's attitude is afforded by the story of the vicissitudes of the local paper (the *Tchernomorsky Viestnik*). This organ, under the editorship of a certain M. Palm, had been thoroughly reactionary; but when the troubles broke out the revolutionists got control of it, obliged the editor to fly for his life, and supplied a staff of their own. Since then it has advocated ultra-Radical, not to say terrorist, views.

Last year a largely attended Socialist Congress was held in the town, with the express permission of General Orbeliani, the military Governor-General, who assured the chairman that he would not be held responsible for any but his own actions and utterances. But as speeches against the Government were delivered—it was hardly to be expected that such a meeting should have been summoned for the purpose of blessing the autocracy and the bureaucracy—the said chairman was promptly arrested and kept in prison for several months. On being set at liberty he was appointed veterinary surgeon to the Tiflis municipal slaughter-house. In the meanwhile the really dangerous anarchists were undisturbed.

But behind all this movement of anarchy and terrorism there were the Georgian Nationalists of various shades, largely backed up by the aristocracy. The treatment of this class at the hands of the Russian Government has not strengthened their loyalty, and they have seized the opportunity of the general unrest to press forward their claims in favour of Georgian nationalism. They make use of the terrorists, secretly support them, and even supply funds for the work of agitation and strikes. These nobles are often outwardly on good terms with the Russian officials, and meet them as comrades and friends. The Vice-Governor said to one of the foreign consuls, while discussing some recent outrages: "If we could only arrest the few really important leaders, all the trouble would be at an end; but we have no notion where to find them." "You must seek them," the consul replied, "in the club,

among your companions at cards, or among your guests at your own dinner-table." The only show of activity on the part of the authorities was made on the day before the Peace of Portsmouth was officially proclaimed, when its conclusion was already a certainty; the local military commandant gave orders that the forts should be put in a state of defence with a view to the possibility of a Japanese naval attack!

A further element of uncertainty is provided by the Turks and Mohammedan Adjars. The latter are of Georgian race, but like the Pomaks and other converts to Islam, they are particularly fanatical, and hate the Christian Georgians very bitterly. They took no part in the strikes, for, like the Tartars, they were anxious to be on good terms with the powers that be, but awaited the opportunity of pouring into Batum, and, with the help of the local Mohammedans, of indulging in a general massacre of Christians. The Adjars are fairly well armed, for many of them have been formed into a sort of irregular local militia or frontier police. It is said that the Government has been trying to egg them on against the Gurians and other Christians, just as it encouraged the Tartars against the Armenians in the eastern provinces, but hitherto no general Christian-Mohammedan outbreak has occurred. The Adjars offered to undertake all the work of the case oil industries and of the docks, but the authorities hesitated before assenting to a measure which would certainly have converted Batum into a shambles. There are many foreign interests in

the town, and the Government was anxious to avoid the international complications which would certainly ensue.

At Batum I had my first interview with a Caucasian revolutionist in his own land. This was a certain Dr. V., who, although not a Georgian by birth, was thoroughly identified with the Georgian Nationalist movement; he was opposed to the Social Democrats, who disregarded the national aspirations of the Georgians. Besides being a doctor he was a prominent member of the town council, and the right-hand man of Prince Andronikoff, the mayor. Being anxious to have a talk with him, I obtained an introduction through a friend. Not that an introduction was necessary, for every one in the Caucasus is only too ready to welcome a foreigner, especially if he is a journalist or writer, for each person wishes to make his own views known to the European public; but I was new to the country at the time, and thought that without introductions I should be regarded with suspicion. Dr. V. is a short, keen-eyed, middle-aged man, very nervous, but intelligent and enthusiastic. As he spoke no German or French, and as my Russian was very rusty, he produced an interpreter, a dark-skinned, dark-eyed Italian-Greek-Levantine-Turk, a ship-chandler by trade. He is (or was at that time) a Turkish subject, but called himself an Italian, and spoke the very oddest Italian I have ever heard. He was dressed with a sort of Levantine sham smartness, had well-oiled black hair and moustache, a flaming tie, and a diminutive silver-tipped walking-stick. Dr. V. and the inter-

Mohammedan at Prayer.

Chakva, near Batum. Drying Tea Leaves on the Imperial Estate.

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preter called on me at the hotel, and on my asking a few questions as to the revolutionary movement and aspirations, the doctor burst forth into a torrent of eloquence in which he set forth the history of Georgia from the earliest times, with a wealth of ethnological, geographical, and philosophical digressions. It was a considerable time before he reached even the Russian conquest, and doubtless if he could have stayed all night he might have come down to the present situation. But he had barely time to sketch it out in a few words without going into details, for he had another engagement. It was my first experience of that love of abstractions and theories which is so common in the Caucasus, and that habit of always going back to the dim origins of things before coming to the point. I cannot pretend that I was much illumined by my interview, for Dr. V. talked so fast and for so long without stopping that by the time he paused the poor interpreter could not remember a quarter of the discourse, and what he did remember his Italian was too uncertain to enable him to translate. In fact I understood or guessed more from Dr. V.'s Russian and from his gestures than from the worthy ship-chandler's Italian. However, it gave me an insight into the Georgian mind, and the scraps of information I gathered helped to supplement others I was to get in the course of my travels.

I spent my days at Batum pleasantly enough visiting the town and its beautiful surroundings, not omitting the Imperial estate of Chakva, where there is a large tea plantation under the management of a

Chinaman. Every morning I had a delicious bath in the warm sea, from a very primitive bathing establishment. In the evening the military band played on the boulevard, and in spite of murders and the general feeling of unrest, and the uneasy suspicion that a bomb might burst at any moment, the people walked up and down listening to the strains of "Carmen" and "Il Trovatore." They were a motley crowd of Georgians in the long *tcherkesska** (a sort of frock-coat, tight at the waist, adorned with cartridge pockets) and *bashlyk* (a hood-turban), dark Persians in tall, black fezzes, blue-coated gendarmes, wild-looking Cossacks, handsome Adjars in tight-fitting costumes of an indigo hue, with a sprinkling of men and women in European attire, Russians or foreigners. All these divers elements were outwardly on friendly terms with each other, and quite ready to chat peaceably to-day—and to cut each other's throats to-morrow.

* The word is a Russian one, and means Circassian; although the costume was originally that of the real Circassians, it is now commonly adopted by many other Caucasian peoples.

CHAPTER IV

KUTAIS AND THE GEORGIAN MOVEMENT

THE line from Batum to Kutais follows the sea-coast for a few miles, and then turns inland into the rich alluvial plains of Mingrelia—a soil bursting with fertility but cursed by the everlasting malaria. Transcaucasian railways leave much to be desired as regards comfort, speed, and cleanliness, but the curious sights along the line more than make up for other drawbacks. At every station is the usual variegated crowd of picturesque natives, with their many racial types, and the usual confusion of goods and untidy parcels on the platforms. Small boys and girls come to the carriage windows to sell fruit, of which there is a marvellous abundance. For five kopecks (1¼d.) you can get a large basket of figs or a huge bunch of grapes; but alas! the Caucasus deserves its fame as the land of unripe fruit and the luscious-looking products of the soil prove to be hard, sour, and indigestible. Why the peasants do not wait a little longer and pick them only when really ripe, I cannot conceive. At Samtredy, there is a branch line

to Poti, the original terminus of the Transcaucasian railway before the Russian occupation of Batum. This station is celebrated as being one of the chief resorts of thieves and cut-throats in the Caucasus; you cannot leave your compartment unwatched while having lunch, and it is necessary to summon a *nossilshtchik* (porter) to look after it. Most Russian railway stations are infested with thieves, and it is always advisable to have your carriage locked by the guard when leaving it for more than a few minutes; but in the Caucasus, as in some large Russian stations, this is not enough, for the thieves are provided with keys, so that personal supervision is necessary. A peculiarity of the Transcaucasian lines is the enormous number of ticketless passengers. As soon as a train starts numbers of well-armed barbarians rush into the carriages, cling on to the platforms—they often jump in when the train is already moving at its mad career of twelve or thirteen miles an hour. The guard comes round for tickets and difficulties arise; this sort of Ollendorfian conversation ensues: "Have you a ticket?" "No, but I have a large revolver and a large knife, and my brother has a large revolver and large knife, and so have my cousins and my friends." The guard takes in the situation at a glance and passes by on the other side. It has been calculated that some 30 per cent. of the passengers on the Caucasian lines were innocent of tickets. I need hardly add that the line does not pay, but as it is guaranteed by the State and gets a subvention, the shareholders receive dividends, so that everybody is happy.

KUTAIS GEORGIAN TYPES.

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A four hours' run brought me to Kutais, which is on a short branch line from Rion Junction on the Batum-Baku line to the important coal mines of Tkvibuli. Kutais is a quaint, attractive old town built on both banks of the Rion river and dominated by a steep, wooded hill, on the summit of which are the ruins of a castle and of a large church. The streets are irregular and unpaved, so that in dry weather they are buried in clouds of dust, and when it rains the mud is several inches deep and expands at frequent intervals into large lakes. The houses are of a curious Oriental style, not like those of Turkey, but with marked peculiarities of their own. They have large wooden balconies and projecting eaves, and their dominant feature is the glass-covered veranda, on to which many of the rooms look. It is a most inconvenient arrangement from the point of view of comfort, especially in hot weather, when it effectually excludes fresh air. In the hotel, which is otherwise quite decent, nearly all the rooms have both window and door opening on to the veranda, so that there is no means of ventilation, and the atmosphere is indescribable. From the bridge over the Rion one enjoys a charming view, both up and down stream, of the quaint old houses overhanging the banks of the surging torrent, and the masses of trees and luxuriant vegetation add a charm of freshness.

The population of Kutais numbers some 30,000 souls, nearly all of them of the Georgian race —Khartvels, Mingrelians, Imeretins, Svanets, and other varieties—and there are small settlements of Russians, Armenians, Mohammedans, and Jews. It

is the capital of a government with a population of over a million. The town is the centre of the Georgian movement, and may be regarded in a sense as the capital of Georgia, for now that Tiflis is becoming more and more Armenian the Georgians are shifting westward, and Kutais is the largest purely Georgian town. A walk through the bazars offers a sight of many picturesque types; handsome, dignified men attired in the usual *tcherkesska*, tall Astrakhan cap, gaily-coloured tunic, trousers tucked into high heel-less boots, and long knives attached to the leather belt. Nominally, no one is supposed to carry arms, but as a matter of fact nearly every Georgian does. The women are less picturesque than the men; the most striking detail of their costume is the little flat embroidered cap, whence a long, white veil hangs down; artificial curls are usually attached to it. The members of the aristocracy generally wear the native costume, but of course richer and more splendid than that worn by the peasants. A white *tcherkesska*, adorned with gold braid, is particularly becoming. I remember one old Georgian, who had served in the Russian army and had been wounded in the last Turkish war; his *tcherkesska* was of a rich reddish brown, his breast was covered with decorations, and he wore a beautifully chased *kinjal* and an elaborate revolver. Another Georgian prince I met—there are princes by the hundred in Kutais—indulged in a most peculiar head-dress; when I first saw him I thought he was wearing a particularly large lamb's-wool *papakh* (native cap), but on closer inspection it proved to be his own very ample and curly hair! He was a fairly

KUTAIS. HOUSES AND GARDENS ON THE RION.

KUTAIS PRIMITIVE NATIVE CARTS WITH SOLID WHEELS.

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well-educated man, and had travelled even as far as London a few years before. That huge head of hair in Piccadilly is a thing imagination boggles at.

Kutais has few of the resources of civilization. There is, as I have said, a fair hotel kept by an old Swiss lady and her daughter, the boulevard (a square garden in the middle of the town with large trees and no flowers), a theatre where performances are given in Russian and Georgian, and a few unambitious shops. It has been left out of the march of progress, and is materially far behind most Russian towns, and even many Caucasian towns such as Tiflis, Baku, Batum, or Vladikavkaz. But the scenery of the neighbourhood is very beautiful and mountainous, and there are some interesting old buildings to be visited. On the hill above the town are the ruins of what must have been a really fine church of red sandstone. It is an oblong in form with rounded apse and transepts, and narrow, round-arched windows somewhat suggestive of Norman architecture. In fact the Georgian style, like the Armenian, to which it is closely allied, is an outcome of the Byzantine, and there is little doubt that Greek architects or natives educated at Constantinople built many of the churches. Even Russian architecture is derived from the Byzantine, but it has greatly exaggerated all the features of its models and made them awkward and ridiculous, whereas the Georgian-Armenian churches, if without the wealth and splendour of those of Constantinople, preserved a genuine purity of design which appears even in comparatively modern buildings. Another more interesting church is the monastery of Ghelati, about two hours' ride from

Kutais. There is a broad, grass-covered enclosure, surrounded by a stone wall, on the side of a hill over the valley of the Tzkhal-Tzitheli, embracing a splendid panorama of forest-clad heights and rocky peaks, with fresh, green valleys and plains extending in every direction. The cathedral of St. Mary, in the middle of the enclosure, is an imposing structure built of colossal blocks of red sandstone. The exterior is a rectangle, but the roof indicates the cruciform plan. At the crossing of the nave and the transept is a polygonal drum supporting a conical dome. Several projections and additions have been built round it, such as three porches, which somewhat obscure the general shape of the edifice. The interior is impressive, for its unusual proportions, combining great height with a comparatively small area, produce an effect of vast size and dim distances. There are frescoes and mosaics of no great artistic merit on the walls, but decorative and attractive; some are said to be the work of Genoese artists in the Renaissance, for that nation had intimate connection with the land of Colchis. Besides the cathedral there is a little chapel containing the tomb of David, King of Georgia (1089–1125), and the iron gates of the Persian city of Ghanja (the modern Elizavetpol) captured by him. To-day both the tomb of the conqueror and the city he captured are under the rule of the same alien people. The monks have the reputation of being somewhat inhospitable and disinclined to show strangers the treasures of the church. But my experience was different. After I had been taken round all the sights by a courteous monk and was waiting until the

heavy storm, which had broken after months of heat and drought, should cease, the *igumen*, or abbot, sent to fetch me, and received me in a most friendly manner in his own apartment. He was a handsome, grey-bearded old man, and spoke Russian slowly so that I should understand, and once when he thought I had not grasped his meaning he translated his remarks into ancient Greek! He asked me if in my country there was freedom of speech and of conscience, and on my replying in the affirmative, he sighed and said, "Alas! here we are slaves of a tyrannical Government; but better times are coming, and we too shall soon have a revolution."

When the rain stopped my guide and I remounted our horses and turned homewards. The former was an immensely fat Mingrelian; like all Caucasians he knew how to ride, but his vast proportions made it impossible for him to mount on to the high native saddle without a step or a heap of stones. Once he was mounted he would start off at a gallop down the most impossible tracks and through deep pools of mud. For some reason or other he did not wear the picturesque native dress, but rigged himself out in a very rusty, ill-fitting black suit, pointed yellow boots, a stiff shirt and collar of bright pink, a black tie and a cycling cap; a more incongruous figure could hardly be conceived. This was my first experience of a Caucasian saddle, and I shall not easily forget it. It consists of a large leather cushion placed on the wooden framework, and attached to it by means of the belt which keeps the whole affair on the horse's back. The stirrups are so placed that you cannot lean

back but are obliged to sit perfectly straight, and as they are very short your legs are crumpled up at an angle of thirty degrees. Bridle and saddle are in the most dilapidated condition, and kept together with bits of string ; there are quantities of little straps and buckles and other oddments for which I could find no conceivable use. The horses themselves are wiry little mountain ponies, with a distant touch of the Arab in them, and if you are fortunate you may get one which really has some go ; but as a rule hired animals are most unsatisfactory, and any one intending to ride a great deal should buy his steeds, for they are very cheap.

There are many cultivated and intelligent men among the Georgians, and indeed the government of Kutais has one of the lowest percentages of illiteracy in the Empire. The Georgians are an essentially literary people, and most members of the upper class write in the newspapers and reviews. Georgian papers are published at Tiflis only, and hitherto permission to issue a Georgian paper at Kutais has always been refused by the Russian authorities. There are quite a number of Georgian poets of distinction both ancient and modern, of whom the best known are Rustaveli among the older ones (the author of "The Man in the Leopard's Skin"), and Prince Ilya Chavchavadze among the moderns ; there is also a Georgian national drama, and a host of translators from foreign languages, novelists, and journalists. Literary activity has gone hand in hand with the political movement, and the chief writers are also the leaders of Georgian Nationalism. One finds Prince Chavchavadze's portrait

Monastery of Ghelati, near Kutais.

A Georgian Priest.

in many a country inn and peasant cottage, as well as in the houses of the better class. The Georgian theatre is quite a flourishing institution, and some of the actors are excellent, although the majority of the plays are translations.

This love of literature is common to many races who, although civilized, have been denied political freedom, and books are the only outlet for exuberant and cultivated intellects. But if literature has kept alive national sentiment, it has in the case of the Georgians militated against a development of a practical spirit like that of the Armenians. Consequently, in spite of their cleverness, the Georgians are a weaker element than their capabilities would lead us to believe, and they are everywhere giving way before the more "pushful" Armenian.

The Georgian is sympathetic, handsome, very friendly and hospitable, well-mannered, but unpractical, happy-go-lucky and extravagant. Few of the Georgian nobles have remained even moderately wealthy; there are immense numbers of impoverished "princes" all over the Caucasus, although they have not lost their pride with their wealth. At the same time they have given proof of a devoted attachment to ideals and a readiness to undergo great sacrifices for the sake of their nationality and freedom which are wholly admirable.

I had occasion to visit some Georgian interiors at Kutais, and in all I found a warm welcome and friendly hospitality. A Georgian home, even of the better class, is a simple establishment, and the people's way of life primitive and unostentatious. The chief

furniture consists of broad, hard sofas called *takhtas* covered with handsome Oriental carpets, other rugs hung up on the walls, and a few chairs and tables of Russian and German make. All the men of the upper class speak Russian as well as Georgian, although it is not always the case with the women. Some speak French and German too, and a few even English.

The fascinations of the Georgians have attracted many foreigners to visit the land and study the people, and the latest addition to the little band of Georgian scholars is an enterprising English lady whose acquaintance I made while at Kutais. An excellent linguist, she determined to add Georgian to her many other tongues, and indeed proposed to learn Armenian and Tartar as well, so as to be able to study the Caucasus *de fond en comble.* Undeterred by weak health and the discomforts which life in the Caucasus entails, she made up her mind to settle down in Georgia for many months, giving English, French, and German lessons in exchange for instruction in Georgian. Already in a couple of months she had made one hundred and twenty-five acquaintances, and by this time no doubt she knows half the Georgian people.

The political situation at Kutais, and the aspirations of the Georgians were reaching an acute stage at the time of my visit. I described in a previous Chapter how the Russian Government, in spite of its treaties and formal promises, destroyed every vestige of Georgian autonomy, and treated Georgia as an integral part of Russia; it did everything in its

power to Russify the inhabitants by means of Russian officials, Russian schools, and Russian bureaucratic methods. But nevertheless the old patriotic feelings were by no means dead, and the greater proportion of Georgians remained attached to their language and nationality. At Tiflis the process of Russification was more successful, and many Georgians of the upper classes took to speaking Russian even among themselves. But at Kutais, and of course in the remote districts, the native tongue continued to hold its own, in spite of the fact that the Russian officials make a point of never learning the vernacular tongues of the provinces they are sent to govern, thus obliging the natives to learn Russian. During the reigns of Alexander III. and Nicholas II., especially while Prince Golytzin was Governor-General of the Caucasus, the policy of the Government was one of extreme reaction and Russification; the Georgians, having no longer an independent Church, were deprived of one focus of national life and activity. Prince Golytzin's especial bugbear was the Armenians and the Armenian Church, but even the Georgians found little favour in his eyes, and every attempt was made to proscribe the Georgian language. Any movement that savoured of nationalism was sternly repressed, and the Georgian *intelligentia*, consisting of nobles and literary and professional men, were objects of profound distrust. In spite of this policy the movement continued to progress in an underhand way, and, although there was no possibility of organization, the leaders of Georgian public opinion secretly hoped for

the time when their old supremacy would be restored. Their aspirations were vague and their discontent latent, but the national sentiment was very real.

When the war in the Far East broke out, and Russian disasters followed one another in quick succession, the Georgians, like all the other subject races of the Empire, as well as the Russian Liberals, began to advance their demands for freedom and autonomy more openly than they had ever dared to do before, several recognized parties came to be formed, and there was a great and unexpected revival of the Georgian idea. Talk of autonomy, freedom, nationality, self-government, was on everybody's lips. But by the side of the national movement, another very active agitation made its appearance—that of the Social Democrats. The conditions of the peasantry in Georgia had long been very unsatisfactory. The nobles, hospitable, extravagant, and unpractical, like Irish landlords, had squandered away their fortunes, and could only exist by squeezing their dependents. The land is held on the *métairie* plan, which, as in Tuscany, where it is worked equitably, results in better relations between landlord and peasant than any other, but where it is abused leads to the most bitter hatred; the peasant has always the feeling of being part proprietor of the land, so that any act of injustice committed by the landlord has far more the aspect of robbery than where the peasant is merely the hired labourer or the tenant farmer. In many parts of the country there are also peasant proprietors, but as a rule they have not enough land to keep them,

as the methods of agriculture are extremely primitive. Moreover, within the last few years a certain amount of industry has been developed in the Western Caucasus. The manganese mines of Chiatury, the coal-pits of Tkvibuly, the large case oil works of Batum, the harbours of that town and of Poti, and of course the railways, gave occupation to numbers of Georgians. There was not a permanent industrial working class, but, as was the case in Russia until quite recent times, the peasants of certain districts were in the habit of going periodically to the industrial centres to work for a few months, returning to their fields at harvest-time. All this provided a most fertile soil for the growth of Socialism, and the newly-formed Socialist party in Russia sent emissaries to the Caucasus in considerable numbers. The Georgian peasantry, as well as some of the students and other "intellectuals," were quickly attracted by the propaganda, and, as M. Staroselsky, the Governor of Kutais, told me, they have now no further need of outside agitators, but are quite capable of providing their own leaders. Curiously enough, the Russian authorities did not altogether disapprove of the Socialist agitation, and we find in Georgia the same tendency to encourage Socialism as an antidote to middle-class Constitutionalism and Liberalism as in Russia itself, where the famous Zubatoff movement of the Moscow workmen was actually organized under the auspices of the secret police. Prince Golytzin and the bureaucrats of the Plehve school were far less afraid of Social Democracy than of the Nationalism of the Georgian

nobles and intellectuals, whose aims were in the direction of constitutional government, and therefore incompatible with autocracy, of national autonomy which might lead to separation and the break-up of the Empire, and of an autocephalous Church, which naturally aroused the fears of M. Pobiedonostzeff. Consequently, Social Democracy, which was in its beginnings a purely economic movement, and at all times essentially anti-national, was not opposed with the vigour which might have been expected, and if not actually countenanced, neither was it actively repressed. Prince Golytzin hoped to create a breach between the Georgian Nationalist upper classes and the peasantry, and to introduce a mild milk-and-water Socialism, sufficient to weaken the autonomists, but docile and friendly to the authorities.

But when, after Prince Golytzin's departure and the outburst of the war, the bonds of discipline were loosened, the revolutionary movement spread like wildfire throughout the land, and it soon became evident that the Social Democrats, who had been slowly and efficiently organizing themselves, had become a real power, and were anything but favourably disposed towards the Government. The Nationalists had been unable to organize, and were therefore less formidable, whereas the Socialist movement had penetrated deep into the minds of the people, so that large districts were almost solidly Socialist. The various groups of Nationalists tried to organize themselves, and having more money were able to achieve something, but it was very little

as compared with what the Social Democrats had done. There was a certain amount of agrarian anti-landlord agitation, and several influential landlords like Prince Eristavi and Prince Guriely were assassinated by their own peasants. The districts of Gory, Dushet, Kutais, and Ozurgety were hotbeds of disturbance, and the peasants began to refuse to pay the landlord his share of the produce of the soil, or at all events to pay only a small part of it. In some cases they quietly gave him notice that his presence was no longer required on his estates, and they provided him with a cart with which to remove himself and his belongings. Over large districts the peasants, on the exhortation of agitators who told them that either God or the Tzar had decreed that the land was theirs, annexed first the property of the Church and the State, and next that of private landlords.

But there was not always great antagonism between landlords and peasants, or between Nationalists and Socialists. The hatred of the Government was so intense that other differences were, if not forgotten, at all events shelved. The nobles had hoped, no doubt, for a return to the old times, when they ruled the land, for the revival of an autonomous Georgia governed by an oligarchy. But seeing that this was impossible, they were ready to ally themselves with the Socialists, or at least to avoid friction with them.

Wishing to learn something of aspirations of the various parties, I applied to Prince M., a pleasant, intelligent old nobleman who had practically given up

his lands as there was no possibility of cultivating them successfully during the present agitation, and was devoting himself to industrial pursuits. He was employed in the Manganese Institute at Kutais—a sort of Chamber of Mines—where he introduced me to representatives of several Liberal groups, and one revolutionist, a certain M. Z. (of whom more anon), sketched out the various aspirations in a most synthetic and clear way. A common feature to all these programmes, which came as a surprise to me, was the fact that every one of them had as its first article the abolition of the Monarchy and the establishment of a republic. I asked my informer if there were no Constitutionalists among the Georgians. He replied, "Only a few *mouchards* (spies) and officials. We have no use for Tzars in the Caucasus." As a matter of fact, I do not think that this was entirely the case, and although republican feeling, as is natural among such a doctrinaire people, is much more general than in Russia proper, there is a considerable proportion of Georgians—probably the majority—who would be satisfied with a Liberal Monarchical Constitution, accompanied by a wide measure of economic reforms. Another common feature was the desire for agrarian reform on semi-Socialistic lines. A third was the large amount of ill-digested abstract theories imported from Europe, regardless of the conditions of ignorance and backwardness prevailing in Russia, and the easy confidence with which the solution of every problem by means of paper reforms was predicted.

I shall begin with the programme of the Federalists. This party desires a sort of Home Rule for the Caucasus, whereby delegates are to be sent to a federal parliament in St. Petersburg for international and general questions, while the local affairs of the country are to be administered by a local assembly. But there must be also a sort of sub-Home Rule for the various Caucasian races—Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, &c.—each of whom are to have a special council. Thus Russia will come to form a federal republic on the basis of the United States of America, and not a centralized republic like France. The Federalists are also Socialists, and recognize the necessity of class warfare. But at present the national problem is so urgent that it obscures the class struggle, and must be solved before social reform and the abolition of capital can be tackled. Once it is settled it will be possible to set to work to develop the "Socialist conscience" of the working classes. In the economic field the Federalists believe that land nationalization will result from the revolution. The domains of the State, of the Church, and of the nobles must be expropriated and handed over to the rural communes, which are to be so organized that every man shall have just as much land as he can work himself without the help of hired labour. The Federalists do not think that society is sufficiently developed at present for the socialization of capital in the towns (personal and house property and industry). Further demands are for an eight hours' day, a minimum salary, and the rest of the general Socialist programme. For the present the Federalist party

is allied with the Social Revolutionists, who believe in the necessity for violent measures to achieve reform. This explains how it is that one finds Georgian nobles and terrorists working more or less hand in hand.

The Georgian Social Democrats are in close touch with that party in Russia, their views being indeed of a more general and universal character than those of any other group. They aspire to a centralized republic, one and indivisible, with no local government beyond that of town and provincial councils, uniform all over the country. They disregard differences of race, nationality, and religion, believing that there would be no racial antagonism if it were not for the iniquities of the capitalists and the nobles. Their ideas of agrarian reform are based on a policy of land nationalization, but they propose to begin by depriving the peasant proprietors of their land so as to make the struggle more acute—"the proletarization of the peasantry," as they call it. In practice, however, their proposals are much less sweeping, and they would limit themselves to giving back to the peasants the land which has been annexed by the nobles and the State since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. The Social Democrats also claim a large number of political reforms, such as universal suffrage (including that of women), the suppression of the standing army, the election of judges, and a wide measure of self-government for the inhabitants of each district. In theory they are opposed to all violent measures and desire to effect their reforms by means of passive resistance to the authorities, and it was thus that the

Ozurgety experiment,* was begun. But latterly they have adopted a more resolute attitude; they have armed themselves and had frequent encounters with the troops in various parts of the country. Their strength lies in the desire for agrarian reform and their practical attempts to put an end to the existing administrative misgovernment. But their weakness in the Caucasus is due to their disregard of the existing and very real racial and religious antagonisms, which cannot be swept away by merely saying that they are not there.

Besides these two parties there are other smaller groups. The Anarchists, merely aim at the destruction of the existing order of the State and society, without troubling about what is to replace it. Then there are the Progressive Democrats and the Party of Independence; both desire the complete independence of the Caucasus, which is to be divided into a number of autonomous federated States. They do not wish to destroy the rights of property, but demand wide social legislation. The idea of rendering the Caucasus, with its hopeless medley of rival peoples, wholly independent is too extravagant to be seriously contemplated. But I have met several Caucasians who hankered after some such solution, and even suggested that England should intervene to bring it about!

What has been the attitude of the Russian Government towards these various movements? Its natural tendency was to repress them unmercifully, but partly owing to its weakened prestige and partly on account

* See next Chapter.

of the growth of progressive ideas in European Russia it attempted at first to avoid violent methods. But its weakness was so manifest that the Georgians were encouraged to flout its authority, and things reached such a pitch that the Russian officials were incapable of enforcing their orders. The impossibility of coercing the Georgians and a desire to conciliate them led to the appointment of a very liberal, almost socialistic Governor of Kutais, M. Staroselsky. M. Staroselsky is the son of a Russian father and a Georgian mother; he has lived nearly all his life in Georgia, where he held the position of *agronome*, or agricultural specialist—a profession usually associated with liberal ideas. Until about a year ago he was regarded with great suspicion by the authorities, and a perquisition in his house was actually carried out by the police. He was in sympathy and close touch with the local Socialists, who indeed regarded him as one of themselves. But when he was appointed Governor in August, 1905, he found himself in a very difficult position. His Socialist friends abandoned him because he had accepted the appointment; his own official staff and the Russian colony were opposed to him for his liberalism and his Georgian sympathies; and he had not the resource of military power to back him up, for, apart from the smallness of the garrison in Georgia, it was against his principles to make use of force. He hoped, however, to pacify the country by conciliation. "The Government," he said to me, "has given up all idea of coercing the Georgians by violence." He seemed to me a sympathetic, cultivated man, of high ideals and strong principles, very

different from the average type of Russian *tchinovnik*. He was one of the only high Russian functionaries I have ever met who was not in uniform, and he was quite free from all taint of bureaucracy. He believed that in three months the country would be pacified, and if his predictions have not been borne out, it is certain that things would not have reached such a pass had there been more Staroselskys in the Caucasus.*

When I was in Kutais the fullest freedom of meeting and of speech obtained. The very day I arrived I went up to the Arkhiereiskaya Gora to see the ruins of the old church and enjoy the view; there on a grassy plateau I came upon a largely attended political gathering. The scene was almost theatrically picturesque; the people were collected among grey ruins and broken arches, with a hazy background formed by range upon range of blue mountains. Many varieties of strange costumes were there. I could not appreciate the eloquence of the orators nor the force of their arguments, for they spoke in Georgian, but the ever-recurring allusions to *Sotzial-Demokratzia*, *revolutzia*, *biurokratzia*, left little doubt as to the subjects under discussion. Later on I was present at a performance given in the theatre to collect funds for the revolutionary propaganda, and many violent speeches and political allusions were made, the proceedings ending with the *Marseillaise*, sung by the chorus in its Georgian version, of which the air is very tame and emasculated, but the words, I am told, are extremely violent. Even in the streets and in the

* He is now on his trial for high treason. See Chapter XVII.

public garden daily meetings were held, in which the Government was roundly abused, and at every turn one came upon knots of people discussing politics with great heat.

Instances of more violent forms of lawlessness were not wanting, and a few days before I arrived a Russian colonel was murdered in peculiar circumstances. A student had been killed in an *émeute* some time before, and at his funeral several soldiers had brought a wreath to the grave. The colonel, who was well known for his brutality, punished the men severely. A few days later he himself was stabbed in the back in the boulevard in the afternoon. He fell mortally wounded, and though numbers of people were present, including several soldiers, the assassin got off scot-free, and no one came to the colonel's assistance. He remained untended for some time, and when at last help arrived he died on the way home. The funeral was held as quietly as possible, as demonstrations were feared, but the soldiers, who alone were present, could hardly restrain their joy. Every one in Kutais knew who the assassin was, but he was never arrested.

The people were living in a state of excitement, as risings and repressions were feared at any moment, and almost every day news came in from the outlying district of encounters between troops and peasants, of Cossacks being quartered in villages, of murders of landlords and officials, of massacres by soldiers. But in spite of the panic people led their usual lives, chatting, laughing, singing, and discussing politics. It is curious to note that hardly ever was the Japanese

war, then just over, even alluded to, so little was the interest it aroused among the peoples of the Caucasus. The same thing was observable even in Russia, when the great struggle played a far smaller part in the lives of the people than it would have done in any other country. But to the Caucasians the war meant nothing at all.

CHAPTER V

THE GURIAN "REPUBLIC"

A NATURAL complement to a stay at Kutais is a visit to Ozurgety. Kutais is the centre of the Georgian movement, where ideas are discussed and plans matured. But there the Government, in spite of its weakness, still exercised a semblance of authority. At Ozurgety the ideas and plans were being put into execution and a practical experiment in peasant autonomy of a very interesting nature was made. Guria, of which Ozurgety is the capital, is a district of the government of Kutais, where all the peculiarities of the Georgian character are seen in their most intense expression. The Gurians are the bravest and most warlike, most chivalrous, most handsome, most hospitable, most educated, although not the most unpractical of the Georgians. Every village has its own library, and even those furthest from the Government post stations provide their own mail service so as to receive the daily papers from Tiflis, Batum, and Russia. For the past two years they have been putting the theories of Social Democracy into practice, defying the Russian Government and refusing to recognize any authority but their own.

The experiment is to a large extent in accordance with Tolstoy's theories of government, and last spring the great novelist wrote to a friend on the subject as follows :—

"What is happening in Guria is an event of immense importance. Although I am aware that the Gurians have not even heard of my existence, I have nevertheless a great desire to express to them the ideas and sentiments which they have awakened in me by their admirable movement. Tell them, 'There is an old man who for twenty years has been ceaselessly repeating that all the evils of humanity are due to the fact that men are always expecting to find some external aid with which to organize their lives; and when they see that the authorities do not aid them and do not create order, they begin to accuse them, to condemn them, to revolt against them.' What should be done is exactly what the Gurians are doing, viz., to organize life in such a manner that there should be no need for any authority. . . .

"If it is possible, tell them how great was this old man's joy when he learned that what he had been thinking and writing for so many years, what the wise and those who think themselves wise did not understand and would not admit, is just what is understood, and not understood only but realized, by thousands of men on their own initiative, on their own reasoning, and according to their own consciences, and that they are carrying out this task so well and with such firmness that their neighbours are joining them. Tell them that not I alone, but many others rejoice in their

work and are ready to help them if it is necessary and possible, and that we are all convinced that, having undertaken this great task for which they have done so much, they will not abandon it, but will continue in the same road giving an example to the world."

The Gurians themselves, however, reject Tolstoy's theory of non-resistance, and declare that they are ready to fight for their rights if necessary, as indeed they have done recently when the authorities attempted to stamp out the movement by force.

I was naturally very anxious to see this district, the first part of the Tzar's dominions to enjoy freedom even if only for a short time, and I applied to some friends at Kutais. From them I learned that a large meeting was to be held at Ozurgety the following Sunday, at which delegates of all parties and all districts were to be present to discuss a course of action in connection with the *zemstva* which were being introduced into the Caucasus for the first time, and also with a view to further resistance against the Government. The three Kutais delegates asked me to travel with them, and I naturally accepted the invitation most gladly. The visit to Ozurgety caused me to miss the Baku fighting, at which I was much annoyed, but the experience was so interesting as to be some compensation for the disappointment.

It was arranged that I should meet the delegates at the Kutais station, and they would then take charge of me. The train was to start at 2 p.m. on a very hot September day. The station was crowded, for being Saturday numbers of people, in spite of the

unsettled state of the country, were going out of town for the Sunday to enjoy themselves. Only two of the delegates turned up, the third, M. Z. before alluded to, had been obliged to follow a more circuitous route as he was "wanted" by the police. Of the other two, one was a pale-faced, bearded Gurian, a professional man living in Kutais, the other a short, keen-eyed, dark-haired youth attired in a black *tcherkesska* and black fur cap—hardly the costume for this burning weather. Both had travelled in Europe (the former spoke excellent French), both belonged to the extreme revolutionary wing of the Federalist party. I had taken a first-class ticket, but I found that my companions were travelling in a third-class car, as they wished to avoid observation. At Rion junction again an enormous crowd of passengers and idlers, for at this hour the trains from Batum, Tiflis, and Kutais meet. At Samtredy more crowds, and during the stop my companions keep very much in the background, for the authorities have heard of the Ozurgety meeting and there are gendarmes and soldiers on the platform. In the meanwhile Z. has joined us. He is a peculiarly interesting character, and although under thirty has led a very stormy existence. He is a Georgian, and has been exiled from the Russian Empire on account of his political ideas. He had gone to Europe and studied science in Geneva, Paris, and London. But even there he got into trouble with the authorities, for he always consorted with Anarchists, Socialists, and other persons of extreme views. On many a platform in many a European city he had been heard denouncing

the iniquities of governments, the wickedness of capitalists and the bourgeoisie, and advocating the social revolution. He speaks French, English, German, Italian, besides Georgian and Russian, and he is in close touch with the revolutionary leaders of every European country. Now that his own land was in a state of rebellion, he had returned under an assumed name to take his share in the rising. He was said to be a very eloquent speaker and in great demand at revolutionary gatherings. Young, handsome, attractive, enthusiastic to the verge of fanaticism, cultured and intellectual if somewhat unpractical and visionary, he should play a prominent part in the destinies of Georgia. He had been staying at Kutais for some time without being disturbed by the police; but the very day before his departure for Ozurgety he had been denounced. He was aware of being shadowed, and knew that if he went to the station with the others they would probably all be arrested. So he let them know that he would join them later, and walked out of Kutais alone to a neighbouring village. There he obtained a vehicle, and drove to a wayside station some distance down the line, where our train picked him up.

At Notaneby we got out, hired a carriage, and set off for Ozurgety. Once we had left the railway behind us all anxiety as to the danger of arrest was at an end, for we were now in free Guria where the Russian writ no longer runs, and gendarmes, *politzmeisters*, *pristavs*, and suchlike gentry are but vain things. It is already night, and we have a long drive before us. The road is a Russian road, therefore bad; on each

side are fields of grain and tall grasses, with groups of trees and small woods every now and again looming out in the darkness. We meet a few native carts, and some peasants on foot or on horseback at rare intervals, but we frequently stop at wayside inns or cottages to rest the horses and enable our Jehu to refresh himself with spirits. "Have you got something on you?" one of my fellow-travellers asks me. The "something" was a revolver, and the fact that I had not got one caused some surprise. However, I managed to travel all through the Caucasus with no weapons except a walking-stick and an umbrella, and I lost the walking-stick. But I was never in need of arms the whole time. When people are so busy cutting each other's throats, they have little time to devote to strangers, and what they have they expend in trying to convert him to their own particular views, so that he may "tell Europe the truth about the situation."

It is past eleven by the time we reach Ozurgety. Mysterious figures in *tcherkesskas*, or in Russian students' blouses, emerge from the darkness, and enter into whispered conversations with my companions. We are distributed among several houses, I myself finding hospitality in that of a Georgian merchant, whose sons are ardent revolutionists. Although my visit was unannounced the welcome I received was of the heartiest, and I shall always have a most pleasant recollection of the kindly unaffected hospitality of these Georgians. The houses at Ozurgety are small and very simple. Few of them are more than one storey high, built of wood and plaster, and

raised on piles above the ground. Each house stands in its own garden or orchard, and has several wide verandas. The one in which I was lodged contained a fairly large drawing-room, a dining-room, and two or three bedrooms. The furniture, if not æsthetic, was good of its kind and everything was spotlessly clean—a detail which one appreciates after staying in Caucasian inns. There were the usual *takhtas* with their handsome Eastern carpets, a German piano, and large collections of photographs and postcards on the walls. There being no spare room, beds were rigged up for me and Z. in the drawing-room. Making the bed is a simple operation: you remove the rug from the *takhta* put one sheet and a quilt in its place, and there you are. In the morning my host's son brought in a basin and ewer, and poured water over my hands while I washed them, the whole operation being conducted on the veranda. Five minutes after our getting up the apartment was rearranged as a *salon* without a trace of bedroom about it. Life under such conditions is indeed simple. Meals in a Georgian house also differ considerably from those in Western Europe. In the morning, as soon as the *samovar* is alight, the family gathers round the breakfast-table for a light refection of steaming tea, *à la Russe* (with jam in it instead of milk), eggs, and bread. At eleven we had a sort of second breakfast of coffee and bread. At 3 p.m. dinner, which begins with a glass of *vodka* and a *zakuska*, consisting of bits of egg, tomatoes, corn, anchovies, salt fish, &c., followed by soup, trout, roast meat, and fruit, the whole washed down with unlimited quantities of light

red wine. After that there is no more food—and you certainly do not want any—save some grapes, until about 10 p.m. or even later, when a supper of tea, bread and cheese, fish or cold meat, and wine is served. At intervals during the dinner my host's two sons, both of whom had excellent voices, sang snatches of Georgian drinking songs. The conversation was carried on almost entirely in Georgian, but one of the young men who had studied in France and travelled extensively, translated for my benefit.

Ozurgety is a pleasant little town of some 8,000 inhabitants, by the Notaneby river, built on wooded hills a few hundred feet above the sea-level. It has broad, unpaved streets, flanked by small houses mostly of wood, each in its own enclosure where there are trees and grass, but no flower-beds, for flowers are rarely grown systematically in Transcaucasia. There is a bazar with the usual open booths of the East, and a boulevard, or public garden, where the band sometimes plays and meetings are held. Peasants in a variety of costumes are grouped about, a few of them on horseback, others with carts. The whole place has a most peaceful and rural appearance, and one would never suspect what fierce passions are burning beneath these idyllic exteriors nor what bitter hatred of Tzardom a hundred years of misgovernment have instilled into the people.

But to return to the serious business of my visit. The Gurian movement arose about two years ago as a result of the steady propaganda of the Social Democrats combined with the Nationalist feelings of

the people fostered by the Georgian press. It began with a series of demands for reduction of rent, and with protests against the usurpation of peasant land by the State. The Gurians who went to Batum to work in the case oil industry came in contact with the revolutionary agitators, and they themselves soon carried the propaganda to the villages when they returned home. Then came the refusal to pay taxes to the Government, because they had not been imposed with the consent of the people. "Why should Guria," one of my friends said to me, "with its 100,000 inhabitants, continue to pay 250,000 to 300,000 roubles a year to the Russians who barely spend 20,000 on the district, most of which sum is devoted to the police and officials whom we do not want?"

The Russian officials were practically boycotted, and no Gurian would think of applying to a Government official for anything. The *Uyezdny Nachalnik* (district governor), the chief of police, the magistrates, and all the paraphernalia of Muscovite bureaucracy are there, but they have no more work to do. There are some soldiers in the barracks, but in the early days of the movement the peasants avoided collisions with them, so as to give no excuse for violent measures of repression; more recently, however, there have been bloody encounters. The administration was carried on by the inhabitants themselves in the most communistic manner, each man contributing his share of money or labour for the common good. They worked in shifts to maintain the roads and bridges, and one sometimes saw nobles, priests, peasants, and shopkeepers all

Ozurgety. Gurian Types at the Popular Tribunal.

Ozurgety. The Popular Tribunal.

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manfully doing their turn of work. Native schools have taken the place of Russian ones, and the children are taught the three R's combined with Socialist principles in the Georgian tongue.

But perhaps the most curious and interesting manifestation of the Gurian experiment is the administration of justice as conducted by the peasants. It is in some ways a return to the most primitive forms of human institutions, and is probably unique in modern times. The corruption and inefficiency of the Russian courts of justice in Georgia was a byword among the people, and constituted one of the chief grievances of the inhabitants, who constantly but fruitlessly demanded that they should be reformed. When the Gurians initiated their autonomy, they immediately boycotted the Russian tribunals and set up courts of justice of their own. These quickly acquired so much prestige and respect that soon not a single Gurian applied to the official courts for redress. The criminal courts were likewise abandoned, because the police no longer dared to arrest any one, and State prosecutions could not be conducted. Both civil and criminal actions were brought before the *Narodny Sud* (popular tribunal), which also exercised an important function in composing quarrels. When a crime is committed the whole community feel it their duty to co-operate in helping to apprehend the criminal, and brigandage and robbery have greatly decreased in consequence; under Russian *régime* these offences were very common, and their authors rarely discovered or punished. But the *Narodny Sud* goes further, and inquires into the private morals

of the inhabitants. Any man committing adultery or living with a mistress is liable to prosecution and punishment. This is a sort of protest against the loose morals of the Russian officials. The old forms of punishment have been abolished; no one can be legally put to death, nor even imprisoned. The usual penalty is boycotting for a longer or shorter period, and as the community is practically unanimous it can be carried out very effectively. Other curious forms of punishment have also been introduced, such as the following: a peasant of the district of Sharopany having committed adultery with a woman of the place, he and his paramour were summoned before the *Narodny Sud.* They pleaded guilty, and were condemned to ride through the village stark-naked on the back of a donkey; during their progress they proclaimed their sin before all the assembled villagers, declared their contrition, and vowed to lead a pure life in future.

The method of procedure before the *Narodny Sud* is best described by an account of an actual trial. We started out at 11 a.m., a party of about twenty, including my companions of the journey. The court was being held at some distance from Ozurgety, and we had a hot walk across the valley and up a steep hill to the little church of Ekhadia. Here was a wide greensward under the shade of a group of tall oaks, opposite a grey stone chapel. From this spot I enjoyed an extensive and beautiful view of the purple mountains of Guria and of Adjaria extending to the Turkish border, and of the pleasant green valley of the meandering Notaneby. An assembly

of some two hundred people were gathered here to administer justice, mostly peasants of all ages and both sexes in native attire, but also a few "intelligents" in kharki-coloured cotton suits or students' ungainly uniforms, always conspicuous at revolutionary gatherings. The court is composed in a very simple way. There are no judges, no jury, no public prosecutor, no counsel; but every person present, whether man, woman or child, native or foreign, has the right to act in any or all of these capacities, and verdict and sentence are decided by the vote of the majority. One man is elected chairman, but merely for the sake of convenience, and he has no official authority beyond what is derived from the fact that he is old and has studied in a university. Every one, according to this communistic theory, who has an opinion on the matter under discussion has the right to express it, and each vote affects the ultimate decision.

The case to be heard on this particular occasion was an appeal: a certain merchant of Ozurgety had committed adultery, and in consequence of his offence two homes had been broken up. He had been summoned before the *Narodny Sud* some time ago and condemned to perpetual boycott—the highest penalty it could inflict; now, after undergoing the boycott for several weeks, he was appealing to his judges to have it withdrawn. He was a tall man about forty years of age, his expression very sad and melancholy, his hair and beard just tinged with grey. "I admit my sin," he declared, "and the justice of your punishment; but I am deeply penitent, and swear in future

to lead a reformed and virtuous life. The sufferings I have undergone since you boycotted me have been so great, so unbearable, that it would have been better if you had killed me outright. I am lost, ruined beyond hope, unless you relent, and I have come to ask you to forgive me and withdraw the boycott." His words had a genuine ring of emotion and contrition which created a deep impression on the audience. Then followed an animated discussion on the merits of the case. One after another a number of speakers rose and expressed their opinions for or against the appeal for clemency. Those who were in favour of it dwelt on the apparent sincerity of the man's repentance, on the failure of punishment to effect reform if pushed too far ; some with that characteristic love of abstract reasoning, even alluded to "the latest results of science," and quoted obscure German philosophers and Socialist writers. The opponents stated that the man was an old offender in this respect, that at his age his reformation was not likely to be lasting, and that as he had caused the break-up of two homes an example should be made of him. For over an hour the speeches followed each other, illustrated by more or less appropriate arguments, until finally the chairman moved a resolution that the boycott should be withdrawn. On a show of hands those in favour of it were obviously in a majority ; but the opposition demanded a formal counting of votes. After some discussion as to ways and means, it was decided to use the church as a "polling station." One of the peasants sat down before a table near the altar to record the votes,

Ozurgety. The Popular Tribunal.

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while a priest stood by to give a religious sanction to the proceedings. Then each person present at the assembly entered the church by the south door singly, declared for or against the resolution, and made his exit by the west door. The counting of the votes confirmed the result of the show of hands, the boycott was withdrawn, and the penitent was forgiven and admitted once more into the community.

"Is not this," one of my acquaintances exclaimed, who had acted as interpreter, "a far more humane and expeditious method of administering justice than that of the 'properly constituted tribunals'? Is it not better to be tried in this way than by three scoundrels in black robes?"

The meeting then broke up, and I returned home with my hosts. On the way back a small building, shut up and deserted, was pointed out to me; it was the official court-house which had been closed for some time as business was no longer transacted there. The district governor tried to make himself popular by calling himself a Social Democrat; it had indeed begun to be the fashion among the Russian officials in revolution-ridden districts—so long as there are not enough soldiers and gendarmes—to declare that they held democratic views. A little further on I was shown the other Government offices, where the Russian officials were whiling away their idle days drinking tea and smoking cigarettes. At the end of the village are the barracks in which a company of infantry were then quartered. Here of course the real danger to the "republic" lay, but the troops were almost powerless, for every Gurian was armed. My

Ozurgety friends expressed the utmost confidence in the final outcome. I was told of frequent gatherings of thousands of armed Gurians who practised military manœuvres, shooting, and other warlike exercises, including ambulance service. Gun-running is carried on extensively both over the Turkish frontier and by sea, and the Gurians have even sometimes got hold of Government stores of arms.

What is peculiarly remarkable about the movement is the unanimity with which it has been carried out, all classes agreeing in the necessity for getting rid of the Russian authorities. The various parties were quarrelling among themselves as to the future form of government to be established, and in fact the grand assembly to which I had been invited never came off, as the Socialists and Federalists would not listen to each other; but that the Gurians must administer their own country was unanimously recognized. Even most of the landlords, who have lost income by the new arrangement, acquiesce in it fully. "If they (the Russians) wish to restore the old form of government," a Gurian declared, "they must kill us to the last man; till then we shall go on resisting." A high Russian official at Tiflis admitted to me that the movement was most difficult to deal with, "for it is not," he said, "merely the work of outside agitators; it is backed up by the whole population." Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff himself told me that the only way of pacifying Guria was by wide and liberal concessions, and that he meant to regularize and legalize the *Narodny Sud*, "which administers justice far

Ozurgety. The Deserted Court House.

To face page 98. Monastery of Motzamety, near Kutais.

more honestly and efficiently than do the State tribunals."

. . . . .

Since my departure from Ozurgety the situation has become even more acute. The policy of the Russian Government has alternated between concessions and coercion. While it sent a liberal university professor from St. Petersburg to study the *Narodny Sud*, and the method of communistic administration, it inaugurated a series of *exekutzii*, *i.e.*, it quartered troops in villages at the expense of the villagers, and sent detachments of Cossacks and infantry to reduce the people to order. Desperate fighting has taken place in and around Ozurgety. The railway has been cut again and again, and several military trains have been derailed with heavy loss of life, and every day troops along the line have been attacked. When the troops have been successful they have shot down the Gurians without mercy, and the whole province is drenched in blood. What has become of my kind hosts at Ozurgety I have not heard, for hardly any letters get through to or from that disturbed land. I shall never forget their warm hospitality, and I can only hope that a happier fate is in store for that gallant and independent little community.

CHAPTER VI

TIFLIS

THE journey from Kutais to Tiflis takes about eight hours, through fine but not magnificent scenery. The green, fertile valleys of Western Georgia reminded me somewhat of Bosnia, although occasionally one has glimpses of far higher peaks than any in the "Occupied Provinces." The railway climbs painfully up the valley of the Rion, and then of the Kvirili over the Suram Pass to Mikhailovo, the watershed between the tributaries of the Rion and those of the Kura; it is the highest station on the line, and just before it is a long tunnel. A conduit pipe for the transport of naphtha has been laid between Batum and Baku; but a considerable part of the traffic is still carried on by rail, and endless trains of naphtha tanks, like large grey boilers without funnels, are met with the whole way. Once the watershed is passed and the train begins to descend into the basin of the Kura, the landscape changes character. Instead of forest-clad hills and well-watered valleys, we are between bare rocky mountains, the bottom of the valleys alone being partly cultivated.

It is nightfall by the time the handsome station of Tiflis is reached.

Tiflis is said to have been founded in the V. century by Vakhtang Gorgoslan, King of Georgia, and early in the VI. century it became the capital of the kingdom. It was captured and pillaged many times, and was held alternately by the Georgians and the Persians. Timur the Tartar sacked it in 1395, and the Persians razed it to the ground exactly four hundred years later. In 1801 it was occupied by the Russians. Its name is derived from the Georgian *Tbilis*, which means hot, on account of the warm sulphur springs near the citadel.

It is one of those towns which, without being a real capital of an independent or even semi-independent State, is the centre of a large, well-defined region, and regarded by the inhabitants of the surrounding country as the centre of the world, the ultimate goal of all their travels. Situated on both banks of the river Kura, it lies in a narrow valley enclosed by parallel ranges of bare, stony hills. In summer it is one of the hottest places in the Russian Empire, for the naked rocks reflect the sun's burning rays, and at the same time keep out the breeze. The climate is very agreeable in the autumn, when fine, hot days are followed by cool nights for many weeks on end. But in winter, although the cold is never very great, there are sharp winds which render the town unpleasant and not too healthy. The dust is also a great drawback, and the streets are seldom watered. The right, or western, bank of the Kura rises up sharply so that that part of the city is built on

a slope, and the suburbs clamber up the steep sides of St. David's Mount. Eastward the town descends into a depression until suddenly cut short by a precipitous crag with the extensive ruins of an ancient citadel on its summit. A narrow shelf creeps round this rock following the river to other suburbs and a pleasant valley on the opposite side, which has been turned into a beautiful botanical garden. The left bank of the river is flatter, but rises slightly towards the east, and more abruptly at the southern end, where another rocky eminence, crowned by the ancient palace of the Georgian kings, now a prison, is a sort of *pendant* to the citadel.

The north end on both banks is built in the European, or rather Russian, style, with large houses, some of them quite handsome, modern shops, electric light and trams ; here are the residential quarters of the Russian colony and officials, of the wealthiest natives, the hotels and restaurants, and the public offices ; at the extreme north end of the right bank, however, is a poor Georgian suburb, while on the left is a small German colony called Alexandersdorf. In the southern part of the town are the bazars and the poorer quarters, which are thoroughly Asiatic. But Asia penetrates even into the fashionable streets, for the brilliant costumes of the various Caucasian peoples are to be seen in the elegant Golovinsky Prospekt jostling against men and women in European clothes and smart Russian uniforms. The Golovinsky Prospekt is the finest street in modern Tiflis. Here the Viceroy's palace and several other Government buildings are situated, the museum, the two theatres, the

TIFLIS. GROUP OF HIGHLANDERS.

TIFLIS. A COSSACK ON THE VORONTZOFF BRIDGE.

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best shops, and some imposing private residences. At its southern end the Golovinsky narrows down to the Dvortzovaya, a street which debouches into the Erivan square. Here is the handsome town hall, and opposite it the Caravansarai—a large building devoted entirely to business, from the offices of rich Armenian merchants to tiny fruit-stalls. South of the Golovinsky a large square public garden descends the slope down to the river just opposite the Vorontzoff bridge. At the bridge's head stands the Hôtel de Londres, not only the first hotel in the Caucasus but one of the best in Russia, especially as regards the essentially non-Russian virtue of cleanliness. Apart from its other advantages its situation near the bridge is an exceptionally good one, and from my window I could watch the perpetual stream of traffic constantly passing to and fro, the wonderful collection of types from all parts of the Caucasus, Russia, Persia, and Turkey; Herculean porters carrying furniture, Cossack patrols, soldiers going out to the exercise ground, water-carriers, and quaint carts of every description. The Vorontzoff bridge is the most important of the three which cross the Kura. It first spans a narrow, muddy branch of the river to an island occupied by a number of small shops, and then crosses the main current to the small Vorontzoff square. If we wish to leave civilization and plunge into the East, we need only walk from the Hôtel de Londres to the Erivan square through the Soldatsky Bazar. An electric tram runs through it, but there are shops, booths, and *dukhans* (inns) as queer as any in the Tartar or Armenian quarters.

It is chiefly devoted to the retail provision trade; there is an endless succession of butchers' shops whose wares, projecting far out over the pavement, render walking less pleasant even than on the boot-breaking cobbles in the middle of the street. At one end are a quantity of fruit-stalls—and what exquisite ripe fruit one gets here! There are the choice grapes of Elizavetpol, large and luscious, the small Erivan grapes without pips but of delicious flavour, colossal melons, figs bursting with ripeness, peaches worthy of the Arabian Nights, and pears that are a dream.

From the Erivan square we descend by one of many little side streets into the Armenian Bazar. This is soon succeeded by the Tartar Maidan, and finally we come to the Orbeliani baths, which are at the end of the town. Across the river, clustered round the rock-built royal palace, is the Avlabar, or Georgian quarter. The native houses in these streets are all more or less of the Georgian style, similar to those described at Kutais. The veranda seems to be a most important feature; in houses on the river bank it overhangs the stream; it goes all round the courtyard, it adorns the front on the streets; it serves as a passage to give access to the different parts of the house; and the stairway, usually an external one, leads into it. It is used as a drawing-room, as a play-room for the children, sometimes as a dining-room, as a clothes-drying place, and finally, in hot weather, to suffocate the inmates.

The bazars and Avlabar are a maze of narrow, tortuous lanes and dark courtyards, and business is carried on in a thousand curious little shops, in many

of which the goods sold are also manufactured. As is usual in the East, the various trades are distributed among various streets, one street or group of streets being devoted to leather goods and saddlery, another to metal ware, a third to jewellery, a fourth to carpets, and so on. A peculiar feature of the Tiflis streets are the wine-shops, where the wine is preserved in huge swollen sheep or buffalo skins; sometimes one sees a donkey laden with what look like two fat animals with short legs sticking out in the most absurd way. Some of the most attractive shops are those where saddlery is sold. One sees rows upon rows of Caucasian saddles, some very simple, others elaborately adorned with red leather trappings and silver bosses, numbers of leather bags, *nagaiki* (riding whips), stirrups of all shapes and sizes. More fascinating still are the arms shops, where sometimes quite beautifully inlaid Caucasian and Lezghin knives may be purchased. The speciality of the place, the Caucasian silver niello work, is rather commonplace and very inferior to what one sees in Constantinople. But there are handsome silver buckles, and bits of enamel in brilliant colours, which are pretty souvenirs and form suitable presents for relatives. The finest objects are Persian, for we are now not far from the Persian frontier, and Tiflis itself was once in Persian hands. Many of the carpets sold as "Persian" are really made in the Caucasus, especially at Shusha and all the curiosity shops are full of Persian porcelain, Persian wood and metal ware, Persian arms. Another class of curios which may be picked up cheap are the musical instruments. They have the

strangest shapes and produce the weirdest sounds imaginable. Among others I may mention the earthenware drums painted red and yellow, and the *chianury*, a sort of guitar-violin, consisting of an oval case with a straight handle and a sharp steel point at the end. It is played with a bow, but seemed to me to be suitable for warlike purposes as well. You could hold it by the handle and brain your enemy with the case, then you run him through the body with the spike, and finally you give him the *coup de grâce* by playing on the instrument.

The animation of the streets is extraordinary. There are always crowds of people rushing about madly, as though they were in Cheapside or Cornhill, but without policemen to regulate their movements. Men, women, children, horses, donkeys, carts, cabs, rush and clatter about in apparently inextricable confusion, shouting in many languages. You creep down a gloomy passage to escape from the throng, and emerge into a courtyard in which four or five huge shapeless masses are reposing; on closer inspection they prove to be camels. The camel still plays a leading *rôle* in the trade of Transcaucasia, and is even found on the north side of the mountains, although railways are tending more and more to drive him eastward and southward.

The actual "lions" of the native quarters are not very exciting. There is the Shiah *mechet*, or mosque, an unimposing modern edifice, the Orbeliani baths, which, although one is told not to miss them, have little that is especially curious, and the church of the Metekh near the old Royal Palace, from the

TIFLIS. THE MAIDAN OR TARTAR QUARTER AND CITADEL.

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terrace below which one enjoys a splendid view of the town, the river, and the mountains all round. On clear days the snowy peak of the Kazbek may even be seen. The most interesting feature of the bazar, and indeed of the whole of Tiflis, is the population. I have alluded to the number of different races which inhabit the Caucasus, and the forty-five languages spoken by them. At Tiflis you find specimens of all these races, and in the bazars you can hear all their languages spoken, with the addition of such extraneous tongues as Polish, German, French, Italian, Hindustani, Sart, and sometimes even Chinese. The observant stranger soon learns to recognize the main types — Georgians, Tartars, Armenians, Russians—but it takes long before he can distinguish the minor subdivisions of the human species here exhibited.

To attempt to describe all the costumes would fill a small volume, and require countless illustrations in the three-colour process. The Georgians and the mountaineers in *tcherkesskas* of sundry colours and tall fur caps ; the Tartars in long cotton or woollen tunics, usually dark blue or black, with shaven heads and tiny white skull caps ; Persians in *caftans* of some sombre hue, their hair, beard, and nails stained dark red ; Mohammedan *mullahs* in flowing robes and green or white turbans ; mountaineers of many types, some in the *tcherkesska*, others attired in indescribable rags and tatters that are kept together goodness knows how ; Armenians sometimes dressed rather like Tartars but more usually in European clothes ; porters carrying enormous burdens—a huge wardrobe, or an iron

bedstead, or even a piano. Then there are the vehicles of all sorts and descriptions—Russian cabs, with handsome, long-tailed horses and rubber tires, native *arbas* of the most antediluvian type, carts with hooded awning for fruit and vegetables, carts with solid wheels drawn by buffaloes.

Tiflis owes its importance to its geographical position, for it is here that four great lines of traffic converge. There is the railway to Batum which places Tiflis in communication with the Black Sea and the west, the line to Baku for Russia, Central Asia, and Persia, now a third to Erivan and North-Western Persia, and the military high-road over the "frosty Caucasus" to Vladikavkaz and European Russia. It has therefore always been an important centre of traffic for a large part of the Middle East. No longer the capital of a kingdom, it is still a commercial centre of the first rank. All the people of the Transcaucasia come to Tiflis to make their purchases and transact their more important affairs, and most of the business of Government is concentrated here.

The whole town is pervaded by this atmosphere of mixed races, languages, and ideas, and the Russifying methods of the bureaucracy has done little to unite these discordant elements. Tiflis was once, as I said, the capital of the Georgian kingdom, and to this day a considerable part of the population is Georgian, perhaps 35 per cent. But other elements were always numerous, and within the last hundred years the Armenians have been increasing rapidly owing to their migration from all parts of Russia and from

Turkish Armenia. They are certainly a most enterprising race, and here at Tiflis where they constitute but a minority of the population (40 per cent.) they are gradually getting everything into their hands. The Georgians, being extravagant and careless of money, have become poorer and poorer, and have had to sell their houses and land, which the Armenians are only to ready to snap up, and borrow money which they cannot pay back. On the *Duma*, or town council, over three-quarters of the members are Armenians, and they control all the commercial activity of the town. One has but to walk down the chief streets to see that the names over all the chief shops and of the most important firms are Armenian. They may end in -off or in -eff—Kalantaroff, Oganjanoff, Mantasheff, Gukassoff, &c.—but they are merely Russified forms of Kalantarian, Ogandjanian, Mantashiantz, Gukassiantz. Armenian ideas are expressed not only in such papers as the *Mshak* and the *Arshaluis* printed in Armenian, but in Russian newspapers like the *Novoie Obozrenie*, of which the staff is almost wholly Armenian. The case is paralleled by that of certain Bond organs in South Africa printed in English. The fact that the Russian officials do not learn the native language has obliged the natives to learn Russian; consequently Russian is very much commoner in the Caucasus than is English in many British colonies, and numbers of quite uneducated people speak it fluently. All the names of the streets, and by far the greater part of the notices on the shops and the advertisements, even in the poorer quarters, are in Russian, although of course

signs are conspicuous for the benefit of the large proportion of illiterates. In many private families both Armenian and Georgian, Russian is ordinarily spoken. Yet the native languages show no tendency to disappear, but are religiously preserved by means of the press, books, schools, and societies of all sorts.

The Armenians are certainly the most conspicuous element of the population, and one comes across them in every walk of life. If you go to a bank, to a money-changer, to a merchant's counting-house, the proprietors, directors, and most of the employees will probably prove to be Armenians. If you see any particularly large and handsome house and ask to whom it belongs, in nine cases out of ten "a rich Armenian" will be the answer. The best lawyers, doctors, and journalists are Armenians, and until lately one found them even in the Government offices. The Georgians, on the other hand, have lost much of their wealth; I only know of one at Tiflis who has amassed a large fortune in recent times. Tiflis has thus come to be one of the most important centres of Armenian nationalism, although quite outside the real Armenia; after Constantinople which is also outside Armenia, it contains a larger Armenian population than any other city in the world. Here, too, were several important educational establishments, until their closure under the Golytzin *régime;* lately they have been reopened since his policy was rescinded in August, 1905. Even the Russian schools of Tiflis are largely frequented by Armenians. The head-mistress of one of the girls' *gymnasia* told me that 90 per cent. of her pupils were Armenians.

TIFLIS. TARTAR TYPES.

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The Georgians of Tiflis are not very different in character from those of Kutais, save that they are slightly more Russified. One finds the same superabundance of princes, the same handsome, dark-featured men and women, with keen, black eyes, and charming manners, and, it must be added, the same want of practical qualities. But whereas in the Western Caucasus the Georgians are a compact mass with definite national ideals, at Tiflis they are confronted by the Armenians as well as by the Russian Government, and are steadily losing ground. Some of the greatest Georgian families, such as the Gruzinskys, the Orbelianis, the Ratieffs, the Chavchavadzes, still live in Tiflis, but their influence is declining, and the ancient capital of Georgia is becoming every day less Georgian. There are some very delightful personalities among these Georgian nobles. One of the most interesting members of the Georgian aristocracy died while I was in Tiflis—the aged Princess Chavchavadze. The story of her capture by Shamyl in 1856 is one of the most romantic episodes in the history of the Caucasus. Her daughter who, at the age of four, shared her mother's wonderful adventures, is still alive, and is the widow of the Prince of Georgia (Gruzinsky).

Of the other races represented in Tiflis, none play an important part in the town. There are some ten to fifteen thousand Tartars, but they are neither influential nor wealthy. The head of their religion is Ahund-Zadé, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, who, as the official chief of the community, resides there. But Tiflis is in nowise a Tartar or Mohammedan

city; the real Moslem centres of Transcaucasia are elsewhere. Representatives of all the mountain peoples are to be met in the bazar, but their numbers and importance are even smaller than those of the Tartars. They are picturesque additions to the city's streets and market-places, and no doubt add to the tale of murders and robbery for which Tiflis is famous, but otherwise they do not count.

The Russian element is of course much more influential, although it is not numerous. There is a host of Russian officials and a large body of troops, of whom a certain proportion are not Russians, besides a number of Russian shopkeepers and workmen. But owing to their position as rulers of the country, they are bound to influence the aspect and life of the town. The architecture of the modern houses is essentially Russian, and Russian manners and customs are becoming more and more prevalent. All public business is carried on in the Russian language, and the majority of private affairs as well. The schools are nearly all Russian, four out of nine daily newspapers are printed in Russian, and the performances at the two principal theatres are also in Russian. Still the Russians do not feel themselves at home in Tiflis; they are strangers in a strange land which they regard as a place of exile. Many of the higher Government officials have been sent to the Caucasus more or less in disgrace, and are consequently anything but the pick of a class of persons who at best are not the most estimable members of Russian society. It has been said that if Siberia and Central Asia are the hells of the Russian functionary,

TIFLIS. NATIVE CART WITH BUFFALOES.

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the Caucasus is his purgatory. Within quite recent times, however, the Government has attempted to send some of its best representatives to Tiflis, in view of the extremely difficult situation which has arisen.

Social life in Tiflis is of course gayer than that of any other town of the Caucasus, but it cannot exactly be described as brilliant. While I was there things were in an exceptionally disturbed condition, and people lived more quietly than usual, but even in normal times, according to all accounts, the city is not a very lively one. There are one or two big official functions at the Viceroy's palace, and some families do a little entertaining in a quiet way, while every year there is a season at the opera where a series of performances are given by indifferent artists. One of the centres of Tiflis social life is the Krujok, a large club, run chiefly by Armenians. In the winter dances are given, and in the summer there are *al fresco* entertainments in the pleasant garden, where the band plays and *tout Tiflis* may be seen promenading up and down, supping or playing cards, from 9 p.m. until the small hours of the morning.

The people of Tiflis, especially the Armenians, are most hospitable. On arriving I had only two letters of introduction, which, owing to the absence of the persons to whom they were addressed, were of no use until nearly the end of my stay. But I went to call at the offices of the various papers, and the editors vied with one another in helping me to obtain information, and in introducing me to persons likely to be of use. Also in a private way they and the persons to whom they introduced me were most friendly. I

found none of that suspicion which I had been led to expect, and even the Government officials on whom I called were most courteous. I was constantly being invited out to dinner; and excellent dinners they were. The only fault which the Western stranger has to find with these entertainments is the hour at which they take place. It is usually 3 p.m., as it was in England not so very long ago, and a heavy meal at that hour usually precludes both lunch and supper. However, I soon got used to it, and found that even when not dining out it was the most convenient time, as nearly all the people whom I wished to see were visible between twelve and three. Unfortunately it was not the case with everybody, and I have dined out in Tiflis at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 p.m., and supped at 9 and 10—not on the same day, let me hasten to add.

The private houses of Tiflis, although handsomer and larger than those of Batum or Kutais, are by no means magnificent or luxurious. As usual, the one æsthetic feature is the carpets, which are always beautiful; one also occasionally comes on collections of fine old Circassian weapons, silver and gold inlay, and Persian curiosities. One house which I saw was all decorated in the latest *art nouveau* or "secessionist style," which was certainly unexpected in Transcaucasia. It belonged to a rich Armenian engineer who visited Europe every year, and returned with the *dernier cri* in novelties for the house.

There are not many places of interest round Tiflis, and indeed the environs of the city are bare and desolate. One goes through various unattractive suburbs

and places where rubbish is shot, past a few factories and melancholy-looking inns, and once the town is left behind one is in a poorly cultivated, broad, almost deserted valley between bare, rocky mountains. Occasionally one meets with encampments of gipsies or nomad mountaineers living in tents; unkempt men and women of the strangest types, attired in rags and patches of bright colour—survivals of the earliest stages of human development—squat on the ground attending to domestic duties; they are protected by shaggy dogs of enormous size and unparalleled ferocity, which no stranger can approach with impunity.

Nearer to the town, just beyond the citadel rock, is the botanic garden. It occupies a very large area, comprising hills, valleys, woods, and streams. It is intersected by a torrent forming quite a respectable waterfall, as well as by numerous runlets. There is a wonderful show of Caucasian flora, every variety of plant growing in the country, as well as numerous rare exotics, being represented. Another favourite excursion of the people of Tiflis is the hill of St. David, which is now reached by a funicular railway. As usual in Russia, the enterprise has not been properly finished, and the railway, instead of starting from some convenient point, starts from the extreme edge of the town at a great distance from the residential quarters, at a point which can only be approached by a long drive up a very steep ascent. From the summit one enjoys a superb view of the town, the valley, and the surrounding mountains; Tiflis covers an immense area, and every year it extends its tentacles. One is struck by the great

number and extent of green spaces and gardens; almost every house has a garden of some sort, although, as I said with regard to other towns, laid-out flower-beds, or indeed flowers at all, are rare. All around the town are the pitiless heat-giving stony mountains, only broken here and there by vine-clad slopes. Beyond the near hills one has occasionally a view of the glistening snow-clad peaks.

The foreign colonies of Tiflis are fairly numerous; there are Germans, Italians, Frenchmen, Austrians, many Persians and Turks; I do not think there are any British subjects save, perhaps, a few Indians, nor is there a British Consul. The most important member of the consular body is the Persian Consul-General. He holds the rank of Minister in the Diplomatic Service, and enjoys a position of great dignity. There are several hundred thousand Persians in the Caucasus, some of them permanent residents, but the majority temporary immigrants who come for a year or two, or a few months, to work in different capacities, chiefly on the Baku oil-fields. The present Consul-General, Faradjollah Khan, is one of the most cultivated Orientals I have ever come across. He speaks the most perfect French, dresses and looks like a European gentleman, and has an extraordinary knowledge of all the political questions of the Middle East. It is largely to his tact that the Persians have taken practically no part in the recent Tartar-Armenian troubles. Another distinguished and charming member of the Consular body is M. Uermenyi, the Austro-Hungarian Consul, from whom, although I called on him without any

introduction, I received much hospitality and kindness.

But the general appearance of Tiflis, in spite of its modern improvements and not inconsiderable wealth, is not that of a really prosperous or modern city. It has remained essentially Oriental, and backward, for the new civilization engrafted by Russian officialdom is in itself vitiated with Oriental characteristics of an undesirable kind. The administration is neither honest nor efficient, and after a residence of many months in the Caucasus, including a long stay in Tiflis, I could not help feeling that the country is almost stagnant. Nothing runs smoothly ; no service, whether public or private, works efficiently or satisfactorily ; everywhere there are obstacles to progress, and the population, taken as a whole, is not business-like. Even the shops are unattractive and ill-stocked. Apart from Oriental curios it is difficult to buy anything in Tiflis. The goods are of poor quality, but dear in price. With the exception of fruit and other eatables, everything is ridiculously expensive. There is not one really good restaurant in the town, although there is, as I said before, an excellent hotel.

The weakness and incapacity of the Government has, of course, been more noticeable since the country has been in such a disturbed state. While things were quiet it managed to rub along *tant bien que mal*, and an outward appearance of order was maintained. But the increasing centralization of the administration in the hands of St. Petersburg bureaucrats, the corruption of most of the local officials, the fatuous and disastrous Russifying policy of Prince

Golytzin, undermined the whole structure of society, and as soon as the defeats in the Far East shook Russian prestige all the latent forces of disorder, discontent, and revolt sprang to life and reduced the country to its present state of chaos.

Apart from politics, which will be dealt with elsewhere, the Government has committed many sins of omission and commission. Good roads hardly exist in Transcaucasia; railways have been built, but there are no roads to feed them. Everywhere else one must travel along awful tracks of stony or muddy ground, which takes the place of roads. Nor is public safety in the least assured. Even in normal times brigandage, murder, and robbery are rife throughout the country; and in Tiflis itself there is no attempt to secure life and property; in fact, it has been justly remarked that everything is dear in Caucasus except human life.

In every respect Russia's work in the Caucasus compares unfavourably with that of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia and the Herzegovina. In those provinces the Austrian Government, although it has undoubtedly committed errors in attempting to develop the country much too fast, and has failed to awaken the sympathy and loyalty of the population, has at least secured the most perfect order and completely abolished brigandage; it has established absolute religious freedom, introduced a bureaucracy, which, if slow in moving, and inclined to red tape, is perfectly honest and far from inefficient; it has covered the country with a network of excellent roads and railways, and built numerous well-appointed schools. Of course

Austria's task was much smaller—the country is smaller, the population less numerous, and less divided into hostile races. But her resources are also smaller, the potential wealth of Bosnia is much less, the population was infinitely more backward than the Armenians or the Georgians, and the time has been shorter. Austria, in twenty-five years, has converted Bosnia and the Herzegovina from a state of absolute anarchy into one of perfect peace. Russia in a hundred years reduced the anarchy of the Caucasus to a state of unstable equilibrium, which is now relapsing into a chaos hardly less terrible than that of the old days before the Russian conquest. We must, however, not judge the administration too harshly. We should remember that there is Turkey just over the border, where things are infinitely worse. Outward improvements such as railways, trams, electric light, a certain measure of domestic comfort, even if not sufficient to introduce real civilization, do make for progress and help to render life more possible. One is apt to criticize Russian methods because they are so much worse than they at first appear to be, but in spite of their imperfections one may say of the Empire "*eppur si muove.*"

CHAPTER VII

PERSONS AND POLITICS IN THE CAUCASIAN CAPITAL

TIFLIS in September, 1905, was literally bristling with politics. The conditions of the town were anything but peaceful. Everywhere soldiers were patrolling the streets; every important building was guarded by soldiers; the white coats of infantry and cavalry, and the *papakhs* and *tcherkesskas* of the Cossacks were conspicuous at every turn. Passers-by, whether on foot or in cabs, were repeatedly searched for arms, especially at the bridges, where sentinels with fixed bayonets were always posted. One of the advantages of staying at the Hôtel de Londres is that besides the ordinary sights of the Vorontzoff bridge you witness amusing scenes as people are being searched for concealed weapons. Once while "snapping" an incident of this sort I was accosted by a soldier who asked me severely what I was photographing. I innocently replied that I was immortalizing Tiflis street views, and added that I should be much obliged to him if he would tell me the quickest way to the post-office, which after some hesitation he did. I myself was repeatedly searched, but in vain, as my revolver, on the strong advice of a friend who

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(Monument of Prince Vorontzoff in the Background.)

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had lived fifteen years in the Caucasus, had been left behind at Batum. At Tiflis, however, every native who has a permit carries arms, besides many who have not. A story is told of a gentleman who had obtained a revolver-permit from the authorities and always carried both the weapon and the permit with him. One evening, as he was returning home he was stopped at the bridge and searched. The revolver being found on him, he triumphantly exhibited his *razrieshenie* (permit). The soldier looked at the document with a puzzled expression, and then said, "It may be all right, but I cannot read. You must come with me to the *pristav*" (district police commissioner). Off they went to the *pristav*, who saw that everything was *en règle* and let the man depart. On reaching the bridge a second time, another soldier was on guard, and exactly the same thing happened. Again he was escorted to the *pristav*, dismissed by him, and allowed to go in peace; but for a third time the same thing happened. It was not until the fourth time of asking that the unfortunate man was able to get home. Other stories were told of soldiers who, while professing to search for arms, took the opportunity of relieving people of their purses and valuables; although I never met any one who had had such an experience, it did not sound by any means an impossibility in Russia.

The state of affairs in Tiflis was one of constant unrest. There have been many serious disturbances in the town since the beginning of 1905, and it is here that most of the revolutionary committees have their headquarters and many of the

revolutionary plots are hatched. In the early part of the year the Armenians were the element of disorder, for the Troshakist society was on the warpath avenging the confiscation of the Church property. But since the Government restored what it had taken away, it has ceased to conspire against the authorities. The Georgian parties, although most numerous and strongest in the west, have been very active at Tiflis, and many disturbances and strikes were due to their initiative. There is a certain amount of antagonism between the Georgians and the Armenians, largely based on economic grounds, the Georgians accusing the Armenians of gradually ousting them from the Tiflis, while the Armenians sometimes accuse the Georgians of being too friendly with the Tartars. The Social Democrats are also annoyed with the Armenians because the latter are too practical to accept the Social Democratic programme, and demand nothing but a moderate measure of constitutional reform, and the right to practise their religion and their business in peace. But two events brought about a partial reconciliation of Armenians and Georgians as a protest against the brutality of the authorities. In the month of May a meeting of Georgian priests and bishops was held at Tiflis to discuss the question of an autocephalous Georgian Church. At the instance of the Exarch, who is a Russian, troops and police invaded the premises, forcibly broke up the meeting, and beat and maltreated the priests there assembled. This was regarded as such a flagrant act of despotism that it made both communities realize the necessity for co-operation against the Government.

On September 11th a second occurrence took place which united Georgians and Armenians, Socialists and Constitutionalists in their execration of Russian methods of government; it is a deed which for unprovoked and stupid brutality is hardly equalled in all the annals of Russian rule in the Caucasus. For some time past, especially since the *ukaz* of August granting a certain measure of freedom, meetings had been held repeatedly at Tiflis, in which political matters were discussed, and the authorities never attempted to interfere with them. The meetings were usually held in the municipal building, with the permission of the mayor and council. On the above-mentioned day a group of Georgian Social Democrats organized a meeting for that evening, to discuss the question whether the party was to take part in the elections for the newly introduced *zemstva*, and proceeded to the town-hall as usual. But being a holiday the council was not sitting, and the large hall was closed. The Socialists, however, forced their way in, followed by a crowd of some two thousand people, mostly Georgians. Various speeches were delivered and all went quietly for a time. But suddenly a *pristav* and some policemen made their appearance, and ordered the meeting to break up. The Socialists refused and hooted the *pristav*. The latter communicated with General Yatzkievich, temporary Governor-General of Tiflis, who telephoned to M. Vermischeff, the mayor. The mayor replied that he had nothing to do with the meeting as it had assembled independently of him, and that he could not now stop it. General

Yatzkievich thereupon went in person to the town-hall with a few hundred Cossacks and infantry, whom he posted at the exits from the building, in the court, on the stairs, and in the rooms adjoining the assembly-room. The *pristav* said that he would attempt once more to dissolve the meeting peaceably, but General Yatzkievich replied that the matter was no longer in the hands of the police, and that he himself would deal with it. He sent some Cossacks into the hall and ordered the crowd to disperse. There were shouts and hoots, and the Cossacks opened fire on the assembly both from the platform and through the windows from the courtyard. One of the shots from outside killed an orator who was standing up to speak. A *sauve qui peut* followed, every one trying to get out of the building. But at every turn on the stairs, in the passages, in the municipal offices there were more Cossacks and soldiers shooting indiscriminately on all comers. Men, women, and children were massacred by the dozen. A few succeeded in getting out, but even in the street they were pursued, one man being shot dead several hundred yards from the town-hall in a back street. A ghastly incident was that of a lady doctor who, having come to the meeting out of curiosity, was wounded by a shot, but in spite of her injuries she tended others whose injuries were more serious. She was in the act of bandaging a wounded man with some strips of her own clothing, when a Cossack came up and brained her with the butt of his rifle. About a hundred persons were killed, most of whom were buried at the dead of night in a common grave without any religious

ceremony, permission being refused to the relatives to carry the bodies away. The wounded were at least two hundred. It was said that a few revolver shots had been fired from the crowd, which in itself would not be surprising in a country where most people carry arms; but as a matter of fact the only Cossack who was wounded had been hit by a rifle bullet from one of his comrades and not by a revolver shot.

I visited the town hall some days after the occurrence (which took place while I was at Baku); the building was riddled with bullets; broken glass, smashed electric lamps, doors burst in, shattered woodwork, bore witness to the violent scenes enacted. I interviewed several members of the *uprava*, or administrative council, who, although they were Armenians, and had not been on too friendly terms with the Social Democrats, took the affair as much to heart as though their own people had been the victims. The whole of the *Duma* resigned, the *uprava* alone remaining in office to carry on the administration until new elections were held.

Not long after, General Yatzkievich was removed from the position of Governor-General of Tiflis, as a sort of punishment for his brutality, but, with the usual tergiversations of the Russian bureaucracy, he was subsequently sent to succeed Prince Napoleon as Governor-General of Erivan.

On the fortieth day after the massacre, when the *panikhida* of the dead was held (a funeral ceremony of the Orthodox Church), nine bombs burst in different parts of the town—all in the vicinity of Cossack barracks. It was the answer of the Social

Democrats to the affair of September 11th. Until then that party had refrained from methods of violence; but now they felt that the time for "peaceful propaganda" was over. A number of Cossacks were killed or wounded, and their companions revenged themselves by shooting down every one whom they came across. Among others, Herr Müller, the Ober-Pastor of the German Lutheran Colonies in the Caucasus, a most worthy and esteemed man, was killed while on his way to a christening. A Cossack saw him walking along, with a bundle containing his vestments, and, thinking that it was a bomb, fired at him. The clergyman fell, badly wounded, but the soldier, instead of coming to his assistance, fired again and rode off. Herr Müller remained on the ground for two hours, until he was picked up by a passing cab and taken home. He died that night. In the same way, several other innocent persons were killed or wounded, and popular feeling was bitterly aroused against the Cossacks. The latter became so insubordinate that for some days they had to be placed under the *surveillance* of infantry regiments. The Chief of Police is reported to have described them as "a horde of savages who no longer obey orders," and a few days later, at his instance, the Viceroy had them sent away from Tiflis. But it was not long before other detachments arrived.

In spite of repressive measures, the weakness and impotence of the Government were every day more manifest. Although the town was under martial law and the streets were ceaselessly patrolled and no one was supposed to carry arms, hardly a man or boy

was without his revolver and *kinjal*, and political murders were of frequent occurrence. One day Prince Amilahory, a Georgian landowner, and two other persons were shot dead by unknown men while sitting in a tramcar. Not one of the assassins was arrested. Bomb factories were being perpetually discovered—the one form of industry which seems to flourish in Russia at the present moment—but there were always others which escaped detection. Terrorism and blackmail were rife. The censorship of the Press was at times very severe; the censor had been Finance Minister in Bulgaria at the time of the Russian occupation (1878–1885). "No wonder," a Tiflis editor said to me, "the Bulgarians were ungrateful to their 'liberators,' and were anxious to get rid of them, when Russia sent functionaries like that man to rule their country!" But, like all Russian institutions, even the censorship was on the decline, and for some time before the Constitutional manifesto of October 30th, the Tiflis papers were frequently allowed to express themselves pretty openly. One paper in particular, whose editor had the ear of the *Ober-Politzmeister*, was on several occasions permitted to attack the action of the Government and even the conduct of individual officials who were obnoxious to the police department, mentioning them by name. Information concerning their shortcomings was liberally supplied.

The Government of the Tzar in the Caucasus is at present vested in the person of the Imperial Viceroy (*Namiestnik*), Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff. After the annexation of Georgia, in 1801, the country was

ruled by a succession of military governors, of whom the first was General Knorring. Subsequently the custom was introduced of appointing a member of the Imperial family as Viceroy, and, under Grand Ducal rule, the Caucasus enjoyed a certain measure of administrative authority. But in 1882 the Viceroyalty was abolished, and Russian noblemen of high rank were appointed instead, with the title of Governor-General. The last of these was Prince Golytzin, whose unwise policy of setting one race against another, and of encouraging class hatred, resulted in such disastrous consequences. On his departure, the government was held for a time by General Malama, a Cossack of Greek extraction, who, although he speaks nothing but Russian, and is not a man of great genius, seems to have been not unpopular. Finally, in February, 1905, Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff was appointed, with the revived title of Viceroy, and granted very full powers. He is a general of cavalry and *aide-de-camp* to the Tzar, and had served in the Caucasus in his youth, but for many years he held the position of Minister of the Imperial Court. After resigning that very dignified appointment he had retired into private life, but continued to hold a high social position in the capital. He is a man of immense wealth, of very noble family, and has received almost every honour which the Tzar can confer. He is a thorough man of the world, speaks many languages, knows half the crowned heads in Europe, and is altogether a very favourable specimen of the Russian *grand seigneur*. He was sent to the Caucasus, where his name should have proved a popular one, for his

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TIFLIS. MARTIAL LAW: AN ARREST.

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relative, Prince Vorontzoff, was one of the most successful rulers the country has ever had. At the same time, his career at Court was not exactly the best preparation for the task of putting this anarchic land in order, restoring Russian prestige, and reconciling bitter racial and religious animosities.

On my arrival at Tiflis his Excellency was away at the baths of Kislovodsk, where he had been spending the summer; on his return, G. B. and I asked for an interview with him, which was readily granted. The Viceroy's position is superior to that of a mere governor, for he is the direct representative of the Tzar, and is surrounded by all the pomp and panoply of power. To approach him it is necessary to make a formal request for an audience through the Chief of Police, or some other high dignitary, as in the case of Royalty. The chief objection to a visit of this kind is the necessity for donning dress-clothes at 3 p.m., but one must, of course, conform with the customs of the country. His Excellency lives in a huge palace on the Golovinsky Prospekt, painted bright pink, like all Government residences in Russia, containing seventy rooms; it is, in spite of its ugly colour, an imposing edifice, and very handsome inside. The doors are guarded by the Cossacks of the Viceroy's *convoy*, or bodyguard, with drawn swords; a fine set of men, in magnificent red *tcherkesskas* and a variety of silver ornaments. Other Cossacks are at the head of the stairs, waiting to relieve us of our coats and hats. We were first admitted into the ball-room, a beautiful apartment, decorated in white stucco, with a few portraits of Tzars and rows of gilded chairs against

the walls, where about a score of other people were waiting. Most of them were in military or civil uniform; others, who were Georgian nobles, wore the traditional native costume; one or two were, like ourselves, in evening clothes. From the ball-room one enjoys a splendid view of the town and the mountains beyond. On the other side you have a glimpse into an apartment decorated in the Persian style. After about half an hour, a polite young *aide-de-camp* ushered us into the presence of the *Namiestnik*. His Excellency is an oldish but well-preserved man, with a dignified bearing and a pleasant manner. His attitude was very friendly, and he talked openly on many subjects. The burning question of the moment was the Tartar-Armenian struggle, then in full swing throughout the Eastern Caucasus. He frankly admitted the errors of the Russian Government in its treatment of the Armenians, and spoke of *cette désastreuse politique de Golytzin*. In his opinion the Armenians were really a very peaceful and industrious race, and, once the property of their Church was restored to them, and permission to reopen their schools granted, they would, he believed, settle down quietly to their business occupations. "They are too good business men," he added, "not to wish to be on good terms with the Government."

Speaking of the Tartars, he expressed a great personal liking for them, but added that they all had "the instinct of brigandage," and that they needed to be kept in order with a firm hand. "It will be necessary, however," he said, "to grant them liberties and rights, for all men ought to have them equally,

whatever their race or their religion." Such a statement, in the mouth of a Russian Viceroy, even if it were merely a Platonic profession, shows how much progress had been achieved by liberalism at that time. "The Tartars," he continued, "must be educated, for they are among the most backward races of the Empire, and they themselves desire schools, although, unlike the Armenians, they do not want to pay for them; but the Government is quite willing to defray the cost."

On the Georgian question, Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff's sentiments seemed to be no less liberal. He waxed quite enthusiastic in his praise of the Gurian popular tribunals, and said that the revolutionary movement was going to be "killed by kindness." "With concessions of a sort which is called liberal, but is in reality nothing more than justice, we shall satisfy all the better part of the population; while, as for the others, we can easily deal with them." The Viceroy admitted that the chief evil of the Caucasus was its bad administration. "We have a few good officials, no doubt; but the great majority are dishonest. We require a far superior staff of men to that hitherto appointed, and they must be better paid. We give the functionaries great power and very small salaries. Is it surprising that they make use of the former to augment the latter?" How often has this been admitted by Russians in high and responsible positions, yet how seldom has any serious attempt been made to remedy it!

We discussed many other questions, and the impression conveyed on me was that the Viceroy was a man

of excellent intentions and full of goodwill, but far too much of a courtier to deal with the situation. The conditions of the Caucasus required then and require still statesmanlike qualities of the highest order, and great tenacity of purpose, and I much doubted whether Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff possessed them. Ferocious racial and religious antagonism and the spirit of revolt born of generations of oppression cannot be soothed with pleasant speeches and comfortable optimism. Had Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff's predecessors been like him possibly things would never have reached such a pitch, but to repair the errors of men of the Golytzin stamp, and do away with the demoralization produced by an incapable and corrupt bureaucracy requires a far stronger man. Subsequent events have borne out the impressions which I received at my interview, and Russian policy in the Caucasus has followed now one course, now another, the acts of one day being rescinded the next. The Viceroy is much influenced by the more important of his subordinate officials, among whom there is the widest divergence of views.

With the advent of Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff to the Caucasus, several of the higher functionaries were changed. The civil assistant to the Viceroy, General Freze, was succeeded by Sultan Krym-Ghirei, a gentleman of Tartar blood descended from the hereditary khans of the Crimea, but being the son of an English mother he has been brought up a Protestant. He is one of the most honest and respected of the Russian officials of the Caucasus, and has always used his influence with the Viceroy in favour of

liberalism. In Guria, where he conducted an inquiry into the condition of the peasantry, his is a name to conjure with. Most of the provincial governors were changed, and whenever serious disorders had broken out special military governors-general were appointed. Also the Viceroy's own staff was largely changed, a new *Ober-Politzmeister* (General Shirinkin) was appointed, who also brought several new officials in his train. Curiously enough, the police department professed to be the most liberally disposed of all sections of the administration, and one official, M. G., expressed quite democratic opinions, which are said to have influenced both General Shirinkin and Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff. I was told by an Armenian journalist that his Excellency made the appointment of M. G. a *sine qua non* of his own acceptance of the Caucasian Viceroyalty. M. G. is a tall, dark man with black hair and beard, about forty or fifty years of age; he has keen, intelligent eyes, and a glance that seems to take in everything around him. He wears no uniform, which is perhaps in keeping with his position as chief of the secret police. He seems unemotional, cold, and exceedingly astute. One of his most curious peculiarities, for a Russian police functionary, was his outspokenness. Unlike the typical Russian bureaucrat of fiction, or even of fact, he made no secret of his opinions nor of his official methods. On many occasions when G. B. and I went to call on him, he confided his proposals to us, gave us a great deal of interesting information concerning the affairs of the Caucasus and of the revolutionary movement, and even showed us certain

confidential papers concerning the business of his department, papers of a kind which I very much doubt if any British official would have shown to a stranger. Nor were we his only confidants; several correspondents and editors of local papers were treated in the same way, and the latter, although not usually permitted to print the documents in question, were allowed to make use of them for their articles. His ideas, although not untainted with the traditional Russian bureaucratic system, were certainly not those of Prince Golytzin, and he expressed the belief that the Government should look for support to the Armenians as being the most orderly element of the population. He had certain definite views as to how the administration of the country should be carried on, and he was anxious to make them known. One evening he asked G. B., myself, and an Armenian journalist to his office in order to expound them to us. We were there two hours, and a most interesting visit it was. He read out a *doklad*, or report, on the situation in the Caucasus, which he had drawn up especially for the Tzar, suggesting a number of reforms. The document was a very careful and impartial *exposé* of the history of the country during the last three months. M. G.'s views of the affair of the Tiflis town hall were characteristically instructive. He said that once the Cossacks were in the building, and the meeting refused to obey the order to disperse, they were obliged to fire—a somewhat doubtful contention—but that the mistake was to send them there at all. "It would have been better to allow even an irregular and illegal meeting to continue unimpeded, than to

fire on the people. In the first case, no serious harm would have been done, whereas, in the second, a great deal of bitterness has been aroused." He was no believer in the application of martial law, especially in the half-hearted, farcical way in which it was enforced in Tiflis. "Either you have martial law, in which case you apply it in all its rigour—you disarm the population, you allow no one to be in the streets after nine o'clock, and you place the town under a real military dictatorship; or you abolish it altogether. The present system merely annoys peaceful citizens, and interferes with business without being of the least use in maintaining order."

He was by no means well-disposed towards the military governors appointed to enforce martial law in the outlying districts. "They may be good generals," he said, "but they are very bad administrators." He was particularly opposed to the Georgian General Takaishvili, who was in command at Shusha, and he showed me the drafts of several letters, calling that officer over the coals for various sins of omission, especially for failing to restore order, and to protect the lives of the Armenians from the Tartar bands. Even towards Prince Louis Napoleon, who was then Governor-General of Erivan, he was not too tender, for he believed him to have shown insufficient energy in dealing with the Tartar-Armenian disturbances, although my impression was that the Prince was a shining exception among the host of incapable nonentities governing the various provinces of the Caucasus. It is said that it is due to the opposition of the police department, that his Imperial Highness eventually re-

signed the position, and a member of his suite stated that he was perpetually being interfered with by officials whose interest it was to keep things in a disturbed state. It is quite possible, though I have no proof of it, that while M. G. was following one line of policy, other officials of the police department were following an opposite one.

On another occasion he showed me a letter from the police department, addressed to the commandant of the district of Gory concerning that official's intention of arresting sundry persons accused of political offences, and exiling them to the north of Russia "by administrative order" (*i.e.*, without trial). The commandant was advised not to carry out this proposal, "for, on the one hand, the persons in question, being guilty of serious political and even common offences, deserve a more severe punishment than mere exile; while, on the other hand, punishment by administrative order will cause great dissatisfaction among the inhabitants of the district who see friends and relatives removed without any reason being given. As conclusive proofs of their guilt exist, it is useless to resort to a system of punishment *which should be reserved for cases in which there is not sufficient evidence for the purpose of an ordinary trial.*" These documents which M. G. showed to me and to others were all marked *soviershenno sekretno* (extra confidential). M. G. seemed to be no believer in the censorship of the Press, and often declared that in his opinion the Press could by free criticism greatly assist the Government, and was perpetually using his influence to obtain a reduction of the absurd restrictions of the

censorship. The foreign Press was then completely immune from the interference, and the black smears on the English, French, and German dailies, had become a thing of the past in the Caucasus, although in Russia proper they still continued to some extent. On the whole, it appeared to me that M. G. merely wished to see order restored in the way least calculated to arouse the opposition or offend the susceptibilities of the inhabitants. If he sympathized more with the Armenians it was because he saw in them the most peaceful element of the population, and also no doubt because it was the policy of the Government to reverse the Golytzin methods.

About his past record there is some mystery. His opponents declare that he was once a revolutionist, and connected with the Russian political exiles in Paris, although this was denied by his friends; he did belong to the secret police of Russia, and is mentioned in Father Gapon's memoirs as a member of Zubatoff's association of working men organized under police auspices. All I can say for certain is that I experienced unfailing courtesy, assistance, and hospitality from him, and that to judge by what I saw he was a really capable official.

Towards General Shirinkin, the chief of police, public opinion was not very favourable. Although he too professed liberal opinions and did some liberal acts at the time, he was regarded with the deepest suspicion. "When you have lived in Russia a long time," a Baku friend said to me, "you realize what the methods of the *gendarmerie* are, and you can never believe in any member of that force." The recent

return to reaction in the Caucasus is believed to be largely the work of the *Ober-Politzmeister*, although of course the movement has its origin in St. Petersburg. The tergiversations of the Caucasian administration, which now follows liberal tendencies, and now reactionary ones, are said to be due to the fact that the Viceroy is sometimes influenced by such men as Sultan Krym-Ghirei and M. Staroselsky, and at others by General Shirinkin and the reactionary officers.

One thing which was absolutely clear to me from my conversations with official and non-official personages was the general inefficiency and impotence of the Government. In many districts of the west all authority was in the hands of the revolutionary committees, although here and there the troops might hold a town or district. In the south and east the country was a prey to the Tartar-Armenian feud, which the Government was unable to control. In Tiflis itself order could be maintained for just so long as the various revolutionary committees thought desirable. Every Government official complained of the lack of troops, and indeed it was very curious to see a country apparently swarming with soldiers, and yet to hear that they were absolutely insufficient to maintain order. In the course of my tour I visited all the more important centres of the country, and everywhere I saw soldiers, gendarmes, and police; yet nowhere was order fully assured. It might be said of the Government of the Caucasus as was said of the British Government in South Africa at one period of the war, that its authority extended no further than

the range of the rifles of the army. Of course the absence of large bodies of men in Manchuria accounted to some extent for the shortage at home, but as a matter of fact the actual numbers of the Russian army must have been enormously overestimated, and a large part of it evidently existed only on paper.

Daily existence in Tiflis was frequently enlivened by riots and assassinations, and by news of similar occurrences, often absurdly exaggerated, from other parts of the country. Yet life went on much as usual in spite of the unrest. Reading about events in Russia, in foreign newspapers, one is apt to imagine that everybody is in a perpetual state of wild excitement and terror. Relatives and friends abroad saw me in imagination swimming in pools of blood with bombs bursting on all sides; whereas as a matter of fact I was at the time probably eating my dinner in a restaurant to the sound of a band, or expostulating with a railway porter for not having secured the best place for me in the train.

Nevertheless, politics monopolized conversation, and one could talk of nothing else, especially in Armenian circles. But to obtain information about any particular event was not easy, for accuracy is far from being a Caucasian virtue. I do not suggest that the people always wilfully tell lies, although no doubt some of them do. But the Caucasian, be he Georgian, Russian, Armenian, or Tartar, has no notion of the nature of evidence. Moreover, I was constantly delayed in my inquiries by the inveterate Oriental habit of recounting everything *ab ovo*. As I said in a previous chapter, I discovered this charac-

teristic among the Georgians almost the first day I landed in the Caucasus. I had hoped that the Armenians, being a more business-like people, would be a little more plain-spoken, and that I should have no difficulty in getting at the bottom of the situation, or at least of the Armenian view of it. But I was mistaken. One evening I had asked an Armenian gentleman for information on certain matters, whereupon he invited me to call on him the next day to meet one or two other prominent Armenians who would make the situation as clear as day to me. On reaching his house I found my host seated on a sofa with a huge pile of newspapers and type-written manuscripts beside him; around in a circle sat about a dozen other Armenians all bursting with information. Among themselves they talked Armenian of which I understood nothing save such words as "Armian," "Tatar," "Vorontzoff-Dashkoff," "Sultan Krym-Ghirei," "Baku," "Erivan," "Nakhitchevan," "Shirinkin," "*revolutzia*," "revolver," "Mauser," &c. But one of them, a journalist who had lived in Constantinople, talked fairly fluent French and acted as interpreter. I shall not attempt to reproduce the conversation, which, if I remembered it all, would run into several chapters. But this was the sort of thing.

Q. "Can you tell me the cause of the troubles at Nakhitchevan last May?"

A. "When Constantinople was captured by the Latins at the time of the Fourth Crusade, the Armenian people," &c., &c.

After about an hour we come to concrete facts concerning the events in question.

Q. "What are the present demands of the Armenians in Russian territory? Is there any aspiration for an independent Armenia?"

A. "At the time of the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity in the III. century, A.D.," &c., &c. An hour later we have got down to the Turkish conquest, and by midnight we have almost reached the Russian invasion of the Caucasus.

These gentlemen were also very kind in furnishing me with a number of documents concerning recent events; the reports are quite accurate, and replete with interesting matter, but all *very* long. But we must not forget what a great part history plays in actual politics in the East. We in the West are apt to disregard the importance of historic claims, and consider only the questions of the moment; but the national spirit of Oriental oppressed races is based on their past history, and abstract ideas which to us may seem vain things, to them are all in all.

Another characteristic of the Caucasian Armenians is the persistence with which they ask you to express your opinion as to the merits of their feud with the Tartars the moment you arrive in the country. "Who do you think is in the right?" "I do not know yet; I have not had time to inquire carefully into the matter." "But you must know; it is so obvious that the Armenians are in the right that no impartial person can have any doubts." The Armenians realize their own unpopularity, and they make desperate efforts to win strangers over to their side.

After a stay of some months in the Caucasus I

confess that at times I felt a little weary of the Armeno-Tartar controversy, and of the Socialistic aspirations of the Georgians; even the accounts of the iniquities of the Russian Government began to pall. It was quite a relief to be taken one day to see the buildings of the Tiflis Musical Society, and to hear animated discussions concerning the probable programme, not of the Georgian Federalist party nor of the Armenian Constitutionalists, but of the symphony concerts for the coming winter. I was shown over a really very handsome hall which a wealthy Armenian had built, not as a storehouse for bombs nor even for the session of the future Caucasian Parliament, but for the concerts of choir and chamber music.

A still greater contrast to the local atmosphere was afforded by an American man of science staying in my hotel. He had been sent out by the United States Ministry of Agriculture to inquire into the condition of bees in various Eastern countries. He had been in Turkey, the Balkan States, and the South Slavonic provinces of Austria-Hungary, and was now visiting apiaries in the Caucasus, and was interested in the country solely from the point of view of bees. On hearing that he was going to Erivan, from which I had just returned, I began describing the place to him, saying how interesting the political situation was. But he interrupted my account of the Tartar-Armenian disturbances: "Yes, I am told it is a very interesting place indeed. There is a particular kind of grey bee there which does not exist in the United States nor in any part of Europe." On my advising

him to go to Etchniadzin, the headquarters of the Armenian Church, he replied that it had no interest for him. But the next day he informed me he had changed his mind, because he had heard of some hives of an unusual type which the monks kept, and were worth seeing. He had taken a number of photographs on his tour, all of them of beehives and bees. Although in weak health, owing to a bad digestion, and not caring for riding, he was preparing to start on a journey across Persia to India on horseback, all for the sake of his insects. I have seldom come across such an instance of pluck and persistence as in this delicate, middle-aged man, who was ready to undergo any amount of privations and discomfort for the sake of scientific work.

CHAPTER VIII

ARMENIANS, TARTARS, AND THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

THE connection between Russia and the Armenian people dates from the time of Peter the Great, although even before his reign a certain number of Armenians had found their way into Russia. Until that monarch's expedition to Baku in 1722, practically the whole of the Armenian race were living within the dominions of the Turkish Sultan or the Persian Shah. Most of them dwelt on the border territory between Turkey and Persia, which formed a battle-ground between those two Powers. "Oriental frontiers," writes "Odysseus," "are generally vague, unless they have been 'rectified' by European commissions, and it is one of the maxims of Oriental statecraft that it is a good thing to keep the border districts desolate and depopulated, in order that when your enemies invade your territory they may not find much in the way of supplies, and may have some difficulty in advancing. The Armenians suffered severely from the application of this principle. Devoid of all national government, they were raided alternately by Turks and Persians, and harried continuously by local Mussulman chiefs. The government exercised by

Turkey and Persia alike meant little but the exaction of tribute and taxes, with occasional sanguinary reminders that it was the business of Christians to keep quiet."

But after the Russians began to advance into the Caucasus and seized Baku and Derbent, the Armenians, oppressed and persecuted by their Mohammedan masters, applied, through their Patriarch Isaiah, to the Tzar for permission to settle in his territories, where they would enjoy freedom of conscience and a right to live in peace. Peter willingly granted this request, and ordered his representatives to protect them in every way. The wily Romanoff saw in the Armenian people a most useful instrument for the advancement of his Middle and Near Eastern policy, a race widely scattered over the dominions of Turkey and Persia who might be employed against those Powers at the opportune moment. Armenians were granted many exemptions and privileges, and admitted into the ranks of the Russian army and public service, while commercial colonies of them were established in all the chief towns of the Empire. Peter's successors followed a similar policy, and the immigration of Armenians continued and increased.

Where the Armenians were most cruelly persecuted was in South-Eastern Transcaucasia, which was then ruled by Tartar khans or princes under the nominal suzerainty of Persia. The chief khanates were those of Baku, Derbent, Shemakha, Nukha, Erivan, Nakhitchevan, and Ghanja (Elizavetpol). It was from these districts that the Armenians emigrated in the largest numbers. Throughout the XVIII. century,

Russia advanced steadily, ever wresting fresh territories from Turkey and Persia, and every new conquest was followed by a further influx of Armenians from over the border. Sometimes even those who remained behind sent their property to Russia for safe keeping. The Gregorian Armenian Church thus came to have most of its estates in European Russia. Under Catherine II. fresh privileges were conferred on the Armenians and new colonies of refugees were founded, some of which bear the names of the ancient homes of the people, such as Nakhitchevan-on-the-Don and Armavir (Kuban territory).

With the annexation of Georgia in 1800 Russia further increased the number of her Armenian subjects. Wherever she advanced into Mohammedan countries she found the Armenians friendly and helpful, for they regarded her as their deliverer. Nay, the very generals commanding the Russian invading armies were often Armenians, such as Lazareff and Loris Melikoff. It is indeed safe to say that but for the Armenians, Russia would never have conquered the Caucasus. Baku, which had been handed back to Persia in 1735, was reoccupied in 1806; the province of Karabagh which contained the semi-independent Armenian communities known as the Melikates, the last survivals of Armenian feudalism, in 1813; the khanates of Erivan and Nakhitchevan were conquered in 1828–29 after a last war with Persia; this was a most important annexation from the Armenian point of view, for not only did the territory contain a large Armenian population, but it comprised the monastery of Etchmiadzin, the religious capital of Armenia, and a

large number of Armenians fought on the Russian side. Akhaltzykh was occupied after the war with Turkey in 1829; and finally, in the campaign of 1877–78, Kars, which had already been twice taken from the Turks and given back to them, was definitely annexed. Numbers of Armenians emigrated from the districts which the Russians had occupied in these various campaigns but did not hold; thus 10,000 families from Erzerum followed the Russian army out of Turkey after the peace of Adrianople (1829), and 40,000 refugees from Azerbajan did the same after the Treaty of Turkoman Chai in the same year; other immigrations took place in 1878.

The result of these conquests was that the bulk of the Armenians, formerly divided between Turkey and Persia, came to be divided between Russia and Turkey; Turkey has now 1,500,000 Armenian subjects, Russia 1,200,000, only a few hundred thousands remaining in Persia and other parts of the world.

Under Russian auspices the Armenians flourished and progressed in every way, and from the status of miserable *rayahs* of Moslem taskmasters they rose rapidly to that of a wealthy and active *bourgeoisie*. We find them as bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, manufacturers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, and officials all over the Caucasus, and even in European Russia. The Baku oil industry is largely due to Armenian enterprise; at Tiflis, the ancient capital of Georgia, the Armenians form over a third of the population, have practically all the business of the town in their hands, own most of the house property, and constitute 80 per cent. of the town council. Even in the Russian

army Armenians occupied high positions; the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian forces in the Asiatic campaign of 1877 was General Loris Melikoff, an Armenian from Lori, and one of his ablest lieutenants was General Ter-Gukassoff, also an Armenian. The same Loris Melikoff afterwards became chief Minister to Alexander II.; he was all-powerful for a time, and is believed to have drawn up a constitution which would have been promulgated had not the Tzar been assassinated in 1881.

The affection of the Armenian people for Russia is thus easy to understand. Under Russian rule, although subject to all the disabilities of citizens of an autocratic Empire, and to those entailed by a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy, they were at least not liable to periodical massacres; no bar was placed on their advancement in any profession; their property was comparatively secure; and if the conditions of public safety in Transcaucasia left much to be desired, they were incomparably better than those obtaining in Turkey or Persia. The Russian Armenians tended to assimilate themselves to their rulers in many respects. Although attached to their nationality and language, they regarded themselves more or less as Russians, talked Russian almost as much as Armenian, at all events, in the towns, and even Russified their names by changing the terminations *ian* and *iantz* into *off* or *eff*.

In the meanwhile the misgovernment and persecution of the Armenians in Turkey was going from bad to worse, and they were now beginning to dream of imitating the other Christian peoples of

the Ottoman Empire, the Rumanians, the Greeks, the Serbs, and the Bulgars, and throwing off the Turkish yoke. In the middle of the XIX. century Armenian societies were formed in Paris and elsewhere advocating the idea of a revived Armenian nation, and the history of the ancient Armenian kingdom was studied diligently and evoked visions. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 many Armenians were massacred by the Turks for their real or supposed complicity with the Russians. The Berlin Treaty and the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1878 contained clauses obliging Turkey to institute reforms "in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians." But the reforms were never executed, and the discontent of the Armenians took the form of active revolutionary agitation. Turkey being too uncomfortable a place to hatch plots in, Tiflis became the centre of the movement, which the Russian Government did not discourage. In fact, whenever a question between Turkey and Russia arose, it was followed by a recrudescence of Armenian agitation, and by the smuggling of arms across the frontier. Russia made use of the committees for the purpose of furthering her own Eastern policy, and the committees made use of Russian protection to conspire against Turkey. Russia at that time posed, and to some extent actually was, the protector of the Sultan's Christian subjects. The first Armenian society, the Troshak, was very favourable to the Russian Government, and until quite recent times refused to have any connection with the Russian secret societies. The newer committee, formed at Geneva—the Henchak—

was on good terms with the revolutionary party, especially the exiles, who were helped by it to introduce literature into Russia *viâ* Persia. But the main object of all Armenian revolutionists was to liberate Turkish Armenia.

With the murder of Alexander II. the attitude of the Russian Government and the temper of the people underwent a radical change. The tendencies in the direction of liberalism, already on the wane during the last years of the late Tzar, were now succeeded by a return to rigorous repression such as had not been known since the days of Nicholas I. The old ideals of Pan-Slavism, which, however much they may have been used and abused for questionable purposes, had a genuinely humanitarian and generous basis, went out of fashion and gave place to a narrower Pan-Russian and Pan-Orthodox policy. Attempts were made to convert all the non-Russian and non-Orthodox peoples of the Empire into Orthodox Russians. The first outbreak of anti-Semitism was then witnessed throughout the southern and western provinces, an outburst to which the authorities allowed full licence, if they did not actually instigate it. The Poles and the Baltic Germans likewise suffered by this reactionary and bigoted temper, and even the highly-favoured Armenians were not left undisturbed. In the first place, the mere fact that the Armenians "dealt in" plots, even if not directed against the Russian Government, made them suspects in the eyes of the bureaucracy. Then the old Viceroyalty of the Caucasus was abolished, and instead of a Grand Duke under whom the country enjoyed a certain measure of

autonomy, a Governor-General was appointed with a more strictly bureaucratic position, and wholly dependent on St. Petersburg. Lastly, Russia for a variety of reasons, abandoned her old anti-Turkish policy.

She had hoped that by supporting the Eastern Christians she would be enabled to bring more or less the whole of the Ottoman Empire under her protectorate, if not her direct dominion. But the Berlin Treaty deprived her of the fruits of victory, and the liberated peoples of the Balkans showed a spirit which no one, neither Alexander II. nor Lord Beaconsfield, Prince Gortchakoff nor Lord Salisbury, had suspected. The Russian Government, and to some extent the Russian people, were getting tired of the Eastern Christians, and began to regret that so much blood had been shed and so much treasure wasted for their liberation with so little result, both in immediate advantages to Russia and even in gratitude. In the case of the Armenians, moreover, there was less sympathy with their sufferings owing to the difference of religion, for they were not Orthodox, besides being personally unpopular in Russia.

In addition to all these circumstances, Anglo-Russian relations in the early 'eighties were much strained, and war between the two Empires at one time seemed imminent. England, as the friend and protector of Turkey, could send her fleet into the Black Sea at any moment, making its base in the Turkish ports; as Sevastopol was still in ruins, Batum not yet fortified, and the Russian Black Sea fleet still in its infancy, the whole of Russia's southern littoral was open to an English naval attack. Even if a

diversion could be created on the Indian frontier, all the Black Sea ports would be seized or laid in ruins. Consequently an understanding with Turkey became most desirable, both to supplant Great Britain in the East and for purposes of self-protection. But for such an agreement to be possible Russia must cease to worry the Sultan about the Eastern Christians, especially the Armenians, who were regarded as the most dangerous enemies of the Ottoman Empire. This coincided with the suspicion which the St. Petersburg bureaucracy felt towards all agitators, and with its dislike of alien nationalities and heterodox Churches within her dominions.

The first object of attack was the Armenian schools. The *Polojenie*, or regulating statute of the Gregorian Church, issued by the Russian Government in 1836, recognized the Armenian schools, although the curriculum was subject to the approval of the Russian Minister of the Interior. The love of education is one of the most striking characteristics of the Armenian people, and all classes show great anxiety to learn and to have their children well educated. Illiterate peasants are ready to save and starve so as to send their children to good schools, and if possible to the university, and many Armenians have given large sums to endow schools and scholarships. The Armenian schools in the Caucasus amounted to five hundred, and they were, on the whole, superior to the Russian ones, the teachers being for the most part educated men, sometimes with university degrees. Teaching was conducted in Armenian, although the Russian language and the history and geography of the

Empire were also taught. Most of the schools provided elementary instruction alone, but a certain number had five classes, and there were even several gymnasia. The Government has never viewed education in a too friendly spirit, and that which does not impart Russian ideas was always suspected of objectionable tendencies. Suddenly by the *ukaz* of 1884 the last three classes were suppressed, for it was desired that all higher education should be conducted in Russian schools. The control of the Armenian elementary schools was then transferred to the Ministry of the Interior.*

The Armenian clergy protested in vain against the *ukaz*, and the Government's sole reply to these remonstrances was the closing of all the Armenian schools. In 1886 the newly-elected Katholikos † Makar was at last induced to acquiesce in the *ukaz*, and the elementary schools were reopened, but the higher forms remained suppressed, and the teachers were required to possess a Russian certificate and to know Russian. The seminaries were alone left undisturbed. In 1896 the schools were again partially closed, and in the following year Prince Golytzin, who was destined to be the arch-enemy of the Armenian people, was appointed Governor-General of the Caucasus. Almost his first act was the final suppression of all the Armenian schools.

In the meanwhile the Armenophobe policy was progressing in other directions. The censorship of

* See Lynch's "Armenia," vol. i.

† The head of the Armenian Church. See Chapter X. for an account of that Church.

the Press was made even more severe. The Armenian massacres in Turkey, which commenced with a small affair at Erzerum in 1890, went on increasing until they culminated in the hideous butcheries of 1894, 1895, and 1896. Russia did nothing to restrain the Porte, and did not even express disapproval, but on the contrary protected the Sultan against the other Powers who were demanding the execution of the promised reforms. She feared that were these reforms carried out and some form of Armenian autonomy granted, a new Bulgaria in Asia Minor would arise, which in its turn would create an *Armenia irredenta* movement in the Caucasus. Russian statesmen, indeed, regarded the Turkish massacres with the most cynical indifference, and Prince Lobanoff is reported to have said, "Nous voulons l'Arménie sans les Arméniens" —a dictum thoroughly in keeping with Russia's Armenian and Macedonian policy of the last twenty years. But in this connection the sole blame must not be cast on Russia; the Western Powers were also largely responsible, especially England as the prime author of the Berlin Treaty. It is very doubtful whether Russia would have resolutely opposed an energetic action against Turkey had British statesmen had the courage to insist upon it. The Armenian revolutionists were no longer allowed to use Russian territory to conspire against Turkey, and in fact they were now beginning to turn against the Russian Government itself, which had become hardly less hostile than that of the Porte. A few Armenians were found even among the Russian revolutionists.

The year 1896 marks the beginning of a trying

period for the Armenians of Russia. Prince Golytzin was the arm of the reactionary bureaucracy of St. Petersburg, personified in such men as Sipiaghin, Von Plehve, and Pobiedonostzeff. The object of these statesmen was to Russify the Armenians. The Armenian intellectuals were regarded with extreme dislike, and the conception of a revived Armenian nation, which was then being spread about by means of books and pamphlets, was viewed with perfect horror. There were no doubt Armenian patriots who did aspire to a free Armenia, but their proposals were of so vague a nature as to alarm only such nervous and hysterical Governments as those of Turkey or Russia.

The new Governor-General felt a peculiar personal antipathy against the Armenians, and carried out the policy of his superiors *con amore*. The schools, as I said before, were closed; little by little all the Armenians were weeded out of the public service, or resigned voluntarily, until none remained save a few inspectors of taxes. But even this was not enough. It was realized that if the Armenians were to be thoroughly subdued they must be attacked in the chief stronghold of their nationalism—the Gregorian Church. That Church had been placed, to some extent, in leading strings by the *Polojenie* of 1836, but it still managed to maintain a certain measure of independence, and the whole of the clergy from the Katholikos downwards were ardent patriots and natural leaders of the people. The Church property had been used, to some extent, for political or semi-political purposes. It is, moreover, not unlikely that the Russian bureaucrats had a sort of deep down

hope that by making the Church's position impossible and by allowing only Russophil prelates to be appointed, it might some day be drawn within the fold of Orthodoxy. However that may be, on June 12/25, 1903, M. von Plehve issued a decree in which he declared that the property of the Armenian Church had been badly managed and used for political purposes, so that the intervention of the State was necessary for its proper maintenance. Henceforth the lands would be administered by the Russian Government. Ten per cent. was to be deducted from the income for administrative expenses, 5 per cent. for a pension fund, and the rest to be paid back to the Church, the various heads of expenditure being carefully specified. In fact, the Church was placed under tutelage, like an infant or a lunatic. It continued to own the capital of its property, but had no control over the revenue.

The measure in itself, arbitrary as it was, might be not altogether indefensible. Armenians themselves admit that the property was mismanaged; but that the charge should proceed from the notoriously corrupt Russian bureaucracy, who was now to administer the estates, and the brutal way in which the decree was executed aroused the indignation of the Armenian people throughout all the world, more especially as the Church property did not belong to the Russian Armenians alone, but to the Church as a whole. The monastery of Etchmiadzin was occupied by police and troops, the Katholikos was ordered to hand over the keys of the safes, where the Church's title-deeds were kept, to the Vice-Governor of Erivan (Prince

Nakashidze), and, on the prelate's refusal, the safe was broken open and the papers seized.

This act of brigandage converted the whole Armenian people into revolutionists, and the revolutionary committee became co-extensive with the nation. It enjoyed a power and prestige never before dreamed of, and it turned its activities directly against the Russian Government. The Church refused to accept the doles offered to it out of its own property, but every Armenian contributed money for its maintenance, and for the work of propaganda. Prince Golytzin arrested, punished, exiled numbers of Armenians, and ordered dragonnades of Cossacks in the Armenian districts. The Armenians replied with bomb and revolver. In October, 1903, the Prince's life was attempted by Armenians, and he was seriously wounded. His fury against the nation was redoubled, and he is reported to have said, "In a short time there will be no Armenians left in the Caucasus, save a few specimens for the museum." This attempt was followed by others; the officials, who had been closely identified with Armenian persecutions and the seizure of Church property, and Russian priests who had attempted to convert Armenians by questionable means,* were systematically assassinated. The Vice-Governor of Elizavetpol, the District Governor of Igdyr, and the Orthodox priest of Alexandropol were among the many victims of Armenian vengeance. The committee came to exercise a veritable reign of terror,

* Some visited the prisons and promised the Armenian prisoners guilty of common offences that they would be liberated if they joined the Orthodox Church.

and if its methods were violent and bloodthirsty, I do not think that the most law-abiding European can blame it. It became a perfect bugbear to the Russian authorities, who thought they saw its hand in every untoward occurrence. With the growth of its power it also grew more arbitrary, and in many cases its victims were Armenians who were suspected of treachery or refused to acquiesce in its pecuniary demands. The action of the committee also put Russian non-official opinion against the Armenians, who were viewed with increasing dislike and suspicion.

The bureaucracy had hoped that by paralyzing the Church the political activity of the people would cease. But the result was very different, and the officials went about in terror of their lives. The war with Japan having broken out, the dearth of troops was beginning to make itself felt, and the prestige of the Government was on the wane. Georgia was a prey to revolutionary agitation; the Russian element in Transcaucasia was too small and too much imbued with revolutionary ideas to be of any use; there remained only one element to be relied upon—the Tartars—and to them the bureaucracy applied in its difficulty.

For many centuries Tartars and Armenians had dwelt side by side in the same territories. The Tartar khans who ruled what is now Russian Armenia, owned nearly all the land on which Tartar and Armenian peasants worked. The Moslem landlord is always an oppressive taskmaster, but it is particularly on the Christian *rayah* that his yoke is heaviest;

the Armenian peasants of Transcaucasia were a down-trodden race *taillables et corvéables* at the pleasure of their landlords, and even in the towns, where they might accumulate wealth, they were liable to be plundered and murdered by covetous neighbours and freebooters. After the Russian occupation, in which, as I have pointed out, the Armenians played no small part, this oppression ceased and some sort of order and justice was established. Yet, although deprived of political power, the khans and begs still preserved great influence in the country, and the Tartar peasantry looked upon them as their hereditary chiefs, whom it was their duty to obey. Nor were the Tartar estates touched ; on the contrary, owing to the more settled state of the country, they increased in value. Russian nobility was conferred on the chiefs, who were treated with every mark of respect, and often given official positions in the army, the civil service, and the local administration. But the Moslem community could not forget that the loss of their predominance was largely due to the Armenians, for which they never forgave them.

While the Tartars enjoyed many privileges, they could no longer maltreat, rob, and murder Armenians with absolute impunity ; and at the same time they saw their erstwhile miserable *rayahs* progressing in wealth, education, and influence, monopolizing all professions requiring intelligence, and rising in the Russian public service. Although many Tartars were still rich, the sight of the progress of the Armenians was as gall and wormwood to them. Even the richest Moslems preferred to hoard their wealth and lead the

"simple life," which means dirty, untidy houses, coarse food, and no civilized amusements. A few did adopt Western ways and luxuries, but they were exceptions. The Armenians, on the other hand, once they have acquired wealth, indulge their taste for building showy, stone houses; they furnish them more or less in the European style, dress smartly, travel abroad, send their children to the university, in a word, try to Westernize themselves as much as possible. Their wealth irritated the Tartars and aroused the covetousness of the poorer ones; some Tartar landlords, moreover, became indebted to Armenian bankers. At the same time Tartar barbarism excited the disgust and contempt of the educated Armenians. An intelligent and well-bred Armenian professor told me of his meeting with an immensely rich Baku Tartar in the train. "You will hardly believe it," he said, "but that man was attired in a 'reach-me-down' suit, and was eating some very nasty sweets, of the kind which the commonest people like, out of a dirty paper bag. He offered them to me, and I was obliged to eat a few for politeness, but I confess that they nauseated me." It must be admitted that the Armenians do not hide their contempt for the Tartars, and they like to rub in their own superiority.

A more serious cause of hostility is the fact that the Tartars have all, more or less, the instinct of brigandage. From time immemorial they have been raiders, and to this day many villages have no other means of livelihood than plunder. The khans themselves, especially in the mountains, are often little better than robber barons, who keep hosts of armed

retainers to forage for them. According to a secret official document on the conditions of the Elizavetpol Government (written some years ago), the richer and more influential are the Tartar landowners, the worse are the conditions of the people and the more complete the absence of security. Nor have the Tartars much respect for human life. The custom of the vendetta is very widespread, and one murder leads to a dozen others. A Tartar will murder a man of his own race and religion for a trifling cause, and be thought none the worse of; all the more easily will he murder a Christian. A large number of Tartars are still nomads, and migrate annually from the mountains to the plains and from the plains to the mountains with their flocks and herds. In the course of these peregrinations they frequently come into armed conflict with the sedentary Armenians, and murders, outrages, and abduction of cattle are the result.

Then of course there is the religious difference which is at the bottom of all quarrels between Christians and Moslems. Tartars are Mohammedans of the Shiah sect, and it must be mentioned that in the Caucasus it is only the Shiahs who attacked the Armenians; the Sunnis, who are also numerous, took no part in the recent disturbances, and in some cases, as, for instance, at Shemakha, actually prevented the Shiahs from starting a *pogrom*.

When we come to the question of character, we find yet further causes of hatred. The outward characteristics of the Armenian are not attractive. "He produces," according to an Armenian writer, "anything but a pleasing impression on those with whom he

comes in social contact. He is reserved, brusque, rude; his egotism and *amour propre* are excessive; and he is often arrogant to the verge of insult. Though undeniably honourable in all business relations and careful of the rights of others, he is often cruel and merciless in maintaining his own rights. An excellent husband and father, and passionately attached to his home, his conduct towards strangers is often selfish and arrogant. He is cautious and suspicious, and though capable of deep feeling, is averse from any show of emotion. He is wholly lacking in the great talent of making himself agreeable in social intercourse. . . . He is not so much devoid of delicacy of feeling, as boorish and unsociable. In general he shows a want of genuine kind-heartedness, and of that habit of mind which is disposed to treat all men as friends." Of course this is not true of the whole people, and in any case applies chiefly to the urban classes; in my own experience I have met many Armenians whose manners and habits were those of men and women of the world, and among whom, apart from their kindness and hospitality to me, I felt myself in the company of polished Europeans. The hospitality of the Armenians is very great, although seldom accompanied by courtly manners. The result is that they are usually unpopular, and to their real defects others are added by their enemies, which find easy credence among those who cannot get over their unconciliating behaviour.

The Armenians also enjoy a reputation for sharp and not always straight business methods, and they

are accused of being usurers. There is some ground for both charges, no doubt, but it must be remembered that they are of the kind always levelled at peoples who, having great business ability, live among other races who have very little. It is the same with the Jews, especially in Russia. In the Caucasus it is popularly said that it takes ten Jews to cheat an Armenian, just as in England it is said that it takes many Jews to cheat a Scotchman. But on the whole it cannot be admitted that they are really dishonest, most of them are perfectly honourable, and by a commercial ability amounting almost to genius, they have got the economic development of the country into their own hands. With regard to money-lending, the usurers of Baku are nearly all Tartars, whereas those of Tiflis are mostly Armenians. But in no case is usury a very serious evil, and the Tartars suffer from it less than the Georgians; for the former retain their land, while the latter have lost much of theirs, especially in the towns, where they had ruined themselves by extravagant living. It must not be supposed, however, that all the Armenians are mere money-grubbing merchants. Of the 1,200,000 Armenians of the Caucasus, not more than 35 per cent. live in the towns, and of these a large proportion are workmen. The other 65 per cent. are peasants, and peasants of great industry, but without the defects which make the town Armenians disliked.

Although peaceful and hard-working, the Armenians are by no means unwarlike or cowardly, as they are popularly supposed to be, because, being unarmed in

Turkey, they are massacred by armed Moslems. Not to go back to the days when Armenian generals distinguished themselves in the armies of the East Roman Empire, they fought desperately against the Persians in the XVIII. century, and they took part in most of the Russian campaigns in the Caucasus, as I remarked before. Of General Ter-Gukassoff, Mr. C. B. Norman, the correspondent of *The Times* in the Asiatic campaign of 1877, wrote : "The way in which he handled his men at Taghir on the 16th of June, where with eight battalions he thoroughly defeated the twelve which Mahomed Pasha opposed to him ; the stubborn resistance with which he checked Mukhtar Pasha's onslaught on the 21st at Eshek-Khaliass ; the gallant retreat which his half-division effected in front of Ahmed Pasha's twenty-three battalions ; and finally his dashing flank march from Igdyr to Bayazid, and the relief of that place in front of two Turkish corps, both superior to him in numbers, stamp him a general of division of the first class. Had the Tzar many more like him, this war would have been completed a month ago." Some four hundred officers and several thousand soldiers of the same race fought in that campaign. During the present troubles, although almost invariably outnumbered by the Tartars,* they usually got the better of them, being more disciplined and better led. It is interesting to compare the popular

* The total number of Armenians is not far short of that of the Tartars, but in the districts where troubles broke out the latter were nearly always in a large majority (Baku, Erivan, Nakhitchevan, Shusha, Elizavetpol, and Zangezur).

Western estimate of the Armenian with that of the Tartars. The latter, far from regarding them as cowards, profess to fear them greatly; M. Agaieff told me that every Tartar must now arm to protect himself from the bloodthirsty Armenians, and Raghim Khan of Nakhitchevan spoke as though the Tartars were the peaceful lambs devoured by the ferocious Armenian wolves!

Politically, the Armenians are democratic and *bourgeois;* they have no aristocracy, the old feudal system having died out under Moslem rule, and there are really no birth distinctions. The middle class is wealthy, and composed of professional and business men, and an influential higher clergy. They have little love of doctrinaire abstractions, and, in fact, enthusiastic Georgian Social Democrats blame them for their *bourgeois* sentiments. They wish to succeed in life, to be undisturbed in their work, to educate their children, and they do not bother their heads about crack-brained Socialistic theories, which they know cannot be realized, and if they could, would not benefit them. Like Alice, when told that if something or other were done, the world would go round much faster, they reply with regard to Socialism, "Which would not be an advantage." But if their ideals are prosaic and practical, they have shown the most whole-hearted devotion to their Church. Throughout centuries of persecution they have never swerved, and even individual cases of apostasy have been very rare, although they had every inducement to become Moslems. Now in Russia union with the Orthodox Church would have

ended their difficulties, but they have never dreamed of such a possibility.

The Tartars are in every respect the opposite of the Armenians. Their outward characteristics are most sympathetic. They have a dignity of bearing and a charm of manner which endear them to all who come in contact with them. These qualities are indeed common to most Mohammedans, who have a chivalry and gentlemanliness which make us forget even serious faults, and disregard the wrongs and sufferings which they inflict on less attractive Christian peoples. They have been a ruling military caste for centuries, and this has made them an aristocracy of *grands seigneurs*. I have met Tartars whom, although I knew them to be utter scoundrels, I could not help liking. There is something magnificently mediæval about them which the virtuous but *bourgeois* Armenian lacks.

The reader will ask why the Tartars should hate the Armenians more than other Christians—Russians and foreigners. I think the reason lies in the fact that the Armenians are in large numbers, whereas the other Christians are comparatively few ; secondly, the Armenians are permanent inhabitants, whereas the Russians come as soldiers, officials, temporary workmen, and leave after a few years, and the foreigners come to make their pile and also leave soon. Then the Armenians tend to regard every town where they are fairly numerous as being within the Armenian 'sphere of influence," and their progress is to some extent at the expense of the Tartars. The latter realize instinctively, although they would be the last

to admit it, that they are a declining race, and that every step of civilized progress puts them at an ever greater disadvantage, while the Armenians profit by it to become richer and more powerful. They are also less afraid of the Armenians than of the Russians; the former are merely fellow-subjects, whereas the latter are the lords of the land and must be obeyed, as otherwise unpleasant consequences may follow.

The Tartars are extraordinary backward in their development, and as ignorant and barbarous as any race in Asia; for this the Russian Government is largely to blame, as it has hitherto discouraged education among them, while they themselves seldom troubled to provide schools of their own. Until quite recently no Tartar newspapers were permitted, except one at Bakhtchi Sarai in the Crimea, the number of mullahs, the only teachers for a large part of the people, has been strictly limited, and the Moslem faith placed in a position of tutelage under an officially appointed Sheikh-ul-Islam. Politically the Tartars have very few ideas at all. Their natural instincts are in favour of absolutism, and they acquiesce willingly in their old feudal and tribal system. In each district there are two or three families, usually the descendants of the khans, enjoying enormous prestige, who can order their Moslem vassals to do almost anything. They have accepted Russian rule without enthusiasm and without hostility, although in the war of 1877 there was some agitation among the Moslems on the frontier, and one or two regiments were actually mutinous.

But they have taken no part in liberal and revolutionary agitations, strikes, and similar movements, because they are incapable of understanding the meaning of "progressive" theories, and cannot read the literature on the subject. They are united by a religious tie into one community of Shiah Moslems, which includes many who are not Tartars at all, but they have hitherto had no idea of racial or national unity as we in the West understand it. Unlike the Sunni Mohammedans they have not even a spiritual head to look up to; the Sheikh-ul-Islam, being a Government official, has little moral authority, and even the mullahs have less power than among the Sunnis. It is said that certain holy men in Persia called *mujtaids* have some influence over them.

Within the last few years a movement has been growing up among a small group of influential Tartar "intellectuals" to educate the people and create a national political spirit among them. M. Taghieff, the Baku millionaire, perhaps the richest Mohammedan in the world, is the financier of the movement, and M. Topchibasheff, also a very rich man, is its intellectual leader; among his lieutenants are the Baku journalists, Agaieff and Hussein Zadé, and Ismail Beg Gasparinsky, the proprietor of the Bakhtchi Sarai sheet. Although not allowed to print Tartar papers in the Caucasus, they propagated their ideas in other ways, and a Baku paper called the *Kaspii*, although written in Russian, was devoted to Tartar interests; quite recently they have been allowed to issue a Tartar paper at Baku called the *Heyat*, edited by Agaieff, an able scholar,

although a bitter partizan. The Tartar intellectuals are by way of being moderately liberal, but they are furiously anti-Armenian, and have not been without Government backing, as an offset to the Armenian and Socialist movements. More than once they have sided with the reactionaries, but within the last few months they have split up into two parties, one more liberal, the other very retrograde. According to some opinions, there is little to choose between them.

But although no love was lost between Tartars and Armenians, and racial and religious murders were common occurrences, they managed to live side by side under Russian rule more or less at peace with each other. They did not mix socially, but they met over business, at the club, and in connection with Government affairs. It was not until February of last year that the two races actually fought. The origin of the outbreak is somewhat obscure; Tartars and Armenians accuse each other of having begun, but both are agreed that the authorities promoted, or at least encouraged, the feud on their old principle of *divide et impera*. There is, I think, no doubt that the Government did actually encourage the Tartars in the belief that if they attacked the Armenians they would not be interfered with, and would indeed be thought the better of. During the Golytzin *régime*, the Armenians were, as I said, weeded out of the Government service; gradually a new staff was appointed in the Armenian and mixed districts, consisting either of Tartars or of Russians who shared Golytzin's prejudices. Some district

governors, police-masters, and *pristavs*, and practically all the common policemen were Tartars. Consequently the state of affairs in Eastern Transcaucasia came to resemble that obtaining in those parts of Turkey where Christian and Moslem dwell side by side, all offices and authority being in the hands of the latter. Prince Golytzin and his lieutenants conferred many favours on the Tartars, and were perpetually descanting before them on the iniquities of the Armenians. The Tartars were not slow to profit by this state of things. Arms were smuggled over from Persia in large quantities, and a sort of understanding was arrived at between all the chief Tartar notables as to a plan of action. Probably at first only those of the Baku government, where the racial antagonism was most bitter, were implicated in the conspiracy, but very soon the whole Tartar element of Transcaucasia was involved, and possibly also some of the Mohammedans of the West. Of the complicity of those of Persia there is no direct proof. Their general scheme was probably nothing more than an indiscriminate massacre of every Armenian in the governments of Baku, Daghestan, Elizavetpol, and Erivan. The Russian authorities were constantly prophesying an Armeno-Tartar outbreak, and telling the Tartars that the Armenians were sure to attack them sooner or later. When you prophesy a thing long enough the chances are that it will really happen. Then the war in the Far East broke out, and every alien race in the Empire began to advance demands for freedom and reforms. The Tartars felt that they too might

obtain something, and although they cared nothing for constitutions, they felt that the time had come to wipe out their old rivals the Armenians, whom the Government disliked, and, they thought, was not in a position to defend, even if it wanted to do so. In such an atmosphere, the smallest spark was enough to set the whole country alight.

I have set forth the details of the outbreaks and massacres in other chapters and the probable share of responsibility attributable to the authorities in each case. Here I shall merely state a few main facts. In July, 1904, Prince Golytzin left the Caucasus for good, but his lieutenants, General Freze (acting Governor-General) and Prince Nakashidze (Governor of Baku), remained behind to continue his Armenophobe policy; its natural outcome was the Baku outbreak in February, 1905. After Baku there was comparative peace, save for a small affair at Erivan in March, until the ghastly massacres of Nakhitchevan in May. In the meanwhile Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff had arrived in the Caucasus as Viceroy with instructions to initiate a more conciliatory policy. His civil assistant, Sultan Krym-Ghirei, although of Tartar extraction and not too sympathetic towards the Armenians, proved himself a liberal and fair-minded official, and his military assistant, General Malama, took little part in politics, but is admitted to have acted with impartiality; the part played by General Shirinkin, the *Ober-Politzmeister*,* is more

* The Russified German word *Politzmeister* denotes the chief of police of every capital of a government or province; in a few more important towns there is an *Ober-Politzmeister*.

doubtful, but at all events, at the beginning, he too adopted a friendly attitude towards the Armenians. It seemed as though the Government were getting alarmed at the Frankenstein which they had created in the Tartar movement, and beginning to feel that once this ferocious and warlike people were aroused it would be difficult to stop them, and that they might one day turn against their rulers. Then the Armenians, who, it had been thought, could be so easily crushed, had proved themselves very tough customers. Thirdly, the whole of the Western Caucasus was more or less in open revolt, and the Georgians were advancing far more radical demands than the Armenians, who merely asked to be left in peace, and that the Church lands and the schools should be given back to them. The authorities also realized that the Armenians, if conciliated, would prove the most reliable and conservative element in the Caucasus, and that with their friendship the task of subduing the others would be greatly simplified. Consequently, in August, 1905, just before the first of many constitutional *ukazes*, the Government policy performed a complete *volte-face* by restoring the property of the Gregorian Church and granting permission to the Armenians to reopen their schools. This, of course, caused immense rejoicing among the community; the activity of the committees diminished, outrages ceased, and the people were well on the way to be completely satisfied. But the Tartar movement was by no means dead, and recommenced on a larger scale than ever with the Shusha civil warfare and the September massacres at Baku. The authorities may

have been willing, but they were certainly not able, to put an end to the trouble for a long time. As soon as quiet was restored in one place a *pogrom* broke out in another. Consequently the committee again became active in certain towns, and devoted itself to arming the people and directing the operations against the Tartars.

There is one last point to be considered in this connection. I think I have shown that sufficient causes, internal and external, existed for the Armeno-Tartar feud. But there is another view, shared by the bulk of the Armenians, according to which Tartar outbreaks are merely part of a much wider movement of a Pan-Islamic character. It is a vast conspiracy organized in Constantinople and in Teheran, to bring about a union of the whole Mohammedan world, to exterminate the Christians of the Middle East, expel all alien Governments, and revive the glories of the Bagdad Khalifate. To succeed in this scheme it was necessary to begin by getting rid of all the Christian elements in the heart of the great Moslem region, and of these the Armenians were the most important. Hence the Armenian massacres in Turkey. Those of Russia could not be exterminated so long as the Russian Government was strong and more or less friendly to them; but once these conditions had ceased to be, and actual encouragement from the Russians had been received, the attempt to wipe out the Armenians was undertaken.

I took some trouble to inquire into this question, and interrogated a number of people of all races and

classes. But I was unable to obtain any satisfactory evidence on the point. I was told that emissaries from Persia and Turkey had been stirring up the Tartars; that mullahs and softas* had been preaching the Jehad† in the mosques; that the authorities had seized treasonable correspondence on the person of a certain Turkish beg at Batum; that Pan-Islamic proclamations had been published in Agaieff's paper, the *Heyat*, and in a Young Turkish sheet published at Geneva called the *Ittiad*. But I never met any one who had actually seen a Pan-Islamic emissary, or heard him preach Pan-Islamism in a mosque; the proclamations in question were all extremely vague, and could hardly be regarded as advocating anything but hatred of the Armenians and a desire to get concessions from the Government, and as for the treasonable correspondence, it was limited to one letter of no particular importance. Moreover, it is impossible to overcome two difficulties in the way of the Pan-Islamic theory; firstly, the profound hostility between Shiahs and Sunnis, which divides the Mohammedan world into two sections as different and antagonistic to each other as, say, the Ultramontane Clericals and the members of the Free Church of Scotland; and secondly, the fact that the enormous majority of the Moslem people in general and of the Tartars in particular are far too ignorant to understand the meaning of such a thing as Pan-Islamism, which is merely an imitation, originated by a group of Young Turks who have been educated abroad, of the various Pan-Nationalist and Imperialist

* Mohammedan theological students. † Holy War.

movements of Europe, such as Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism. It is an exotic which cannot hope to flourish, at all events for many years to come, on the uncongenial soil of Mohammedanism.

To sum up, in considering the Armenian Question, we must try to avoid being led away by personal sympathies and allowing our admiration for the "noble savage" with dignified manners to warp our reason and outweigh appreciation of the more solid qualities of the Armenians. The virtues of the Armenians are of a kind which are bound to become more and more valuable as civilization progresses, while his vices are for the most part the rough edges which, under a wise and progressive Government, will be rubbed away. This people is the civilizing element of the Middle East, and is likely to remain so. Other races will also, no doubt, become really advanced in course of time; the intelligence of the Georgians is an important factor to be reckoned with, and even the Moslem peoples may eventually shake off the paralyzing influence of tradition and take their place in the general scheme of the world's progress. The best that can be hoped is, not that one race will dominate the others, but that each may contribute something towards the common good of the country.

CHAPTER IX

BAKU AND THE ARMENO-TARTAR FEUD

THE accounts of the September massacres at Baku were slowly filtering into the papers while I was in Georgia, and every day news came of fresh horrors, some true, some exaggerated, some purely fictitious. So I determined to leave Georgians and Gurians and hurry to the oil city. My train was almost empty, but every train I met coming in the opposite direction was crowded with refugees flying from the town. According to some accounts the whole of Baku was in flames and half the inhabitants massacred, while according to others only the oil-fields of Balakhany and Bibi Eybat were burning. All agreed that the authorities had very few troops, but large numbers were reported on the way.

The scenery between Tiflis and Baku is beautiful in some ways, but very desolate, and the desolation increases with every mile. For a short distance after leaving Tiflis the country is fairly green and cultivated in the valleys, but the mountains are quite bare. Then we gradually descend into the vast wastes of the Transcaucasian or Karabagh steppe

Camels in the Caucasus.

In the Karabagh Steppe. A Sleeping Tower.

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Small oases of vegetation appear from time to time, where some colony has been planted to cultivate the land, but as we near the Caspian these specks of green become ever less frequent. There are many stations, but save in a few cases there is no village or town in sight of them; they are merely stopping-places bearing the name of some spot many miles away. Close to each station I noticed some curious wooden towers, consisting of two or three platforms one above the other supported on open frameworks, with ladders going up to the top. They are used by the railway employees to sleep on during the hot weather, so as to escape the malaria, which is very prevalent throughout the Kura valley. One can hardly conceive of a more lonesome existence than that of a station official in this God-forsaken land. Such villages as we pass are incredibly primitive—groups of mud huts covered with straw or grass, sometimes mere holes in the ground hardly distinguishable above the level of the plain. Dark-skinned Tartars in blue tunics throng the stations or ride about the plain on their ambling steeds; occasionally a team of oxen may be seen drawing a plough across the unresponsive parched soil, and a long caravan of slow-going camels passes by. Sometimes for many miles at a stretch there is no living thing in sight, only the endless wilderness where nothing grows but grey artemisia, blue delphiniums, and the poisonous Pontic absinth. In the distance to the north the purple crags of Daghestan shoot up, bold, imposing peaks, sometimes tipped with snow. Many rivers descend into the valleys from those mountains

and also from those of Armenian highlands to the south, as if to join the Kura, but most of them are lost in the parched desert and disappear into the sands. There are, however, some broad expanses of marsh, rich in fever-breeding mosquitoes, and many deep gullies empty in summer but full of water in the rainy season.

The atmosphere is all shimmering sunshine and pitiless heat, which makes every detail of the landscape quiver as if with vitality, but a vitality malevolent to men. One has a sense of the innate wickedness of the nature of this inhospitable land, and it is easy to understand the dread with which the Karabagh steppe was regarded before the railway was built, and the many weird legends concerning it. It was supposed to be swarming with venomous snakes and equally dangerous scorpions. Tales were told of vast armies that had vainly attempted to cross it and had been swallowed up in its hideous waterless wastes. Yet in a more distant past there was here a developed civilization and prosperous cities. It is one of those countries like Persia, Albania, or Asia Minor, where civilization has gone back; the stage of agricultural and urban life has been succeeded by that of pasture, and this again by complete abandonment. Everywhere we come upon traces of buildings and irrigation canals where now hardly a blade of grass will grow. Nor would it be difficult to restore fertility to the land, and in the few spots where irrigation has been attempted, as in the German colonies and in the fields round Shemakha and Nukha good crops are raised once more, for a large part of the soil is the black mould so common in South Russia.

The only large town which the railway passes is Elizavetpol, then quiet enough, but where Tartars and Armenians were to fight in the winter. Verst after verst we crawl down the Kura valley, sometimes in sight of the river, until Adji Kabul, where the line turns northwards between a steep rocky ridge and the sea. The Caspian is glassy and motionless; it seems hardly a real sea at all, but rather some sulphurous pool of the Inferno. Not a tree or grass-patch in sight; the thick grey dust on the ground swirls up in clouds at every breath of air or the passage of the train; the more distant landscape is lost in heat haze. For a few minutes we lose sight of the sea and enter a narrow cutting with high sand dunes and rocks on either side; we soon emerge once more and steam slowly into the station of Baladjary, where the Transcaucasian and Vladikavkaz railways meet. Long lines of carriages and oil-tank trucks encumber many sidings, but while the ordinary traffic is largely suspended there are signs of feverish military activity; the station is thronged with troops, the white uniforms and the glitter of bayonets are ubiquitous, orderlies and officers rush up and down excitedly, and several guns are being entrained. After a long wait the train leaves Baladjary, and soon a heavy black pall appears to the north. It hangs over the oil-fields of the Apsheron promontory, whence, although they are no longer in flames, volumes of black smoke are still issuing. We creep along past sordid suburbs and ruined buildings, and at last draw up in the truly magnificent station of the oil city. An immense crowd is collected on the platform, consisting chiefly

of refugees fighting for places in the outgoing trains. More soldiers, more bayonets, more gendarmes and policemen. I secure a cab with some difficulty, at four times the usual price, for no Tartar or Armenian driver dares appear in the streets, and only Russians are available. Many people are afraid of using cabs at all unless under the escort of a couple of soldiers with fixed bayonets; but as I was neither a Tartar nor an Armenian, and did not look in the least like either, I felt I could safely dispense with such protection.

My first impression of Baku was desolate in the extreme. Grey, dreary, ill-paved streets, deep in dust, flanked by houses of grey stone or mud, machinery piled up in yards, windows closed and shuttered, few passers-by, but perpetual patrols. A certain number of more imposing edifices rise up here and there; they are the palaces of the oil kings and the offices of the various companies. In one or two streets there are some fairly handsome shops, and then close by a wretched Tartar slum. Groups of Tartars and Armenians are gesticulating angrily and excitedly, a party of armed men is seen through a half-closed doorway, and further on a detachment of Cossacks with unslung rifles is on guard. A general sense of expectation and anxiety hangs over the town, and further developments are awaited which will add horror on horror's head.

I reach the Hôtel de l'Europe, a gaunt, comfortless hostelry, high as to prices, low as to everything else. Here I find a number of people connected with the oil world who have left their houses, considering them no

longer safe. I also found my friend G. B., with whom I was to travel for a considerable time.

Baku is in every sense a unique city. Its appearance, its history, its wealth, its natural features, the character of its inhabitants form an *ensemble* at once wonderful and terrible, fascinating and repulsive. It is situated on a hillside and round a broad, well-sheltered bay. The old Tartar and Persian quarters are on the upper slopes of the hill, and consist of a perfect labyrinth of tortuous narrow lanes and ramshackle, tumble-down houses, chiefly of mud; but there are also the remains of an old Persian fortress, a palace of the khans with some fine Oriental decoration, old walls, and several picturesque mosques and baths. The Tartar bazar is enclosed in an extremely narrow space, with booths and shops of the usual Eastern type which does not seem to change from Bosnia to India. There are fragments of Arab and Byzantine fortifications, a curious tower 150 feet high, just below the citadel, and some traces of walls emerging from the sea.

Below and around the old city a number of new quarters have sprung up to shelter the vast influx of people from all parts of the world who have flocked to Baku in the hope of making fortunes. The Tartar quarter is now separated from that of the Armenians by a row of empty houses, for no one dares to live on the borderland between the two. Some of the buildings along the quay are large and imposing, but everything bespeaks the comfortless ostentation and vulgarity of the *nouveau riche*. Baku, considering its immense wealth, is one of the worst managed cities in

the world. The lighting is inadequate, the wretched horse-tram service pitiable, the sanitary arrangements appalling ; vast spaces are left empty in the middle of the town, drinking water is only supplied by sea water distilled, the few gardens are arid and thin, the dust is ubiquitous—fine, penetrating dust that gets into every nook and cranny. The country behind Baku is a very abomination of desolation, treeless and grassless. It seldom rains, in summer it is very hot, and the town is at all times exposed to sharp winds.

Eastward the Apsheron peninsula juts out into the sea, and here are situated the Black Town with the petroleum refineries, and beyond that the oil-fields of Balakhany, Sabuntchy, and Ramany ; those of Bibi Eybat are to the east of the town.

It is a trite description of every Oriental city which happens to have electric light, railways, and trams, side by side with mosques and bazars, to say that it is a mixture of East and West, and to dwell on the contrasts and incongruities of this juxtaposition. But at Baku we have both East and West in their most intense, if not most attractive, aspect. While in no Eastern city are savage passions, bloodthirsty fanaticism, and fiendish cruelty so rampant as in " Petroleopolis," in few spots of the Western world, save perhaps in Johannesburg and in some American cities, is there such fierce financial competition, such mad speculation, such colossal frauds, such a thirst for gain quickly acquired, such a building-up of huge fortunes in a short space of time, and such irretrievable ruin.

Baku is a very ancient city. It is said to have been founded in the VI. century, and it rapidly

attained to a position of great importance owing to its situation as an emporium of commerce ; it is the best port on the Caspian, and forms a most convenient point of transit to or from Persia and Central Asia. Byzantine Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Tartars, Russians, have all held sway over Baku at different times, but the Persians are those who ruled it longest and left the deepest impression. From an early period the existence of the mineral oil deposits and of natural gases was known, and frequently mentioned by mediæval writers. The eternal flames were held in great veneration by the fire-worshippers, and pilgrims came to visit the temples on the Apsheron peninsula from all parts of Asia ; one of these fanes still exists at Surakhany, though it has no worshippers. During the XVI. and XVII. centuries Baku, like the rest of Eastern Transcaucasia, was ruled by Tartar khans under Persian suzerainty. Its whole history is one long record of blood feuds and massacre. In 1722 Peter the Great, who had long coveted the city for commercial reasons and for the oil-fields, sent an expedition from Astrakhan to Derbent, which town was captured, and the following year the Russians entered Baku. Some attempt to develop the oil industry was made and fifty wells were sunk, but the workings were of a most primitive kind. Armenian settlements existed already in the Shirvan province,* but with the Russian occupation their numbers increased. In 1735, in the reign of the

* Now the government of Baku ; before the recent development of the oil city Shemakha was the most important town of the province.

Empress Anne, Baku was restored to Persia, by whom it was held until 1806, when Russia re-occupied it definitely. Since then the oil industry has been greatly developed, slowly at first, but with astonishing rapidity during the last twenty years. In 1829 there were 82 naphtha pits, which rose to 136 in 1850 and to 415 in 1872, when they produced 22,581 tons. In 1858 an attempt was made to extract petroleum from the crude naphtha, and in 1863 the first refinery was founded by the Armenian Melikoff.* Armenians were indeed the pioneers of the industry, although Russians and foreigners soon rushed to Baku in large numbers. In 1871 the first well was drilled, and since then the new system has prevailed over the old. Two years later the first "spouter" or fountain was struck, ejecting vast quantities of oil, and subsequently others were discovered. The Orbeloff fountain (1877–81) was 200 feet high and produced 1,000,000 puds † a week, and the Mantasheff fountain of 1881 was more than twice as high. The total naphtha production of the Baku oil-fields rose from 25,000,000 puds in 1880 to 614,971,689 puds in 1904. At present the total capital invested in Baku amounts to between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000. Of this amount about £8,500,000 is English money. The prices for crude naphtha oscillated between 1·1 kopek per pud in 1892 and 15·7 k. in 1900 (14·67 k. in 1904);

* For the statistics of the oil industry I am largely indebted to Mr. Henry, editor of the *Petroleum World*, who has kindly allowed me to use the figures collected in his book on *Baku*.

† 1 pud = 36 lbs.

Baku. General View of the Bibi Eybat Oil Fields.

Baku. General View of the Harbour.

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that of naphtha residues (mazut) between 1·5 k. in 1892 and 16·4 k. in 1900 (15·04 k. in 1904); that of refined kerosene (photogene) between 7·7 k. in 1892 and 31·5 k. for export and 22·5 for home consumption in 1900 (25·42 k. for export and 20·33 for home in 1904).

The development of the oil industry has made Baku one of the chief industrial centres of Russia, and indeed of the whole world, and no other oil-fields, save those of America, are so large. The importance of the wells for Russia is incalculable. The steam navigation of the Caspian, the Black Sea, and of the whole great river system, the railways of the Caucasus and many lines in European Russia, Central Asia, and Siberia, and a number of miscellaneous industries, use liquid fuel. The Crown derives large revenues from the taxation of the oil-fields, and many tens and hundreds of thousands of families depend for the whole or part of their income on the production of the valuable liquid. But the growth of the industry is largely due to foreign enterprise, and unless we consider the Tartars and Armenians as Russians we may say that Baku is prevalently a non-Russian undertaking. Among the more important firms I may mention the following: Nobel Brothers (the Nobels are Swedes who have become Russian subjects), the Caspian and Black Sea Naphtha and Trading Company (Messrs. Rothschild), the Russian Petroleum and Liquid Fuel Co. (English), the Baku Russian Petroleum Co. (ditto, known as the B. O. R. N.), Shibaieff (ditto), the European Petroleum Co. (ditto), the Bibi Eybat Co. (ditto), Suchastniki (Anglo-

Dutch), Mantasheff (Armenian), the Caspian Co. (ditto, Messrs. Gukassoff), the Moscow and Caucasian Co. (ditto), the Aramazd (ditto), the Baku Naphtha Industrial Co. (Russian), the Russian Naphtha Co. (ditto), the Russian Naphtha Industrial Co. (ditto). The industry is a wildly speculative one. To dig a well is a very expensive operation—it may cost £10,000 or more, and you may never strike oil at all. Large fortunes have been made or lost in a few weeks.

The whole population of Baku, including the Bailoff promontory, the White Town, the oil-fields, and the neighbouring villages, amounted before the disturbances to over 200,000. It is an extremely mixed population, composed of almost every race of East and West, and is divided as follows: 74,000 Russians (immigrants from all parts of Russia who only stay a short time at Baku), 56,000 Tartars (natives of the town and district), 25,000 Armenians (natives and immigrants from all parts of the Armenian world), 18,000 Persians (mostly immigrants for a short time), 6,000 Jews, 4,000 Kazan Tartars, 3,800 Lezghins, 2,600 Georgians, 5,000 Germans, 1,500 Poles, and many other nationalities numbering less than 1,000 each. It will be seen by these figures that a very large part of the population is fluctuating, and that only a small proportion can be set down as native or permanent. Of the latter the Tartars form the great majority; they own by far the greater part of the land and house property, including the soil where several of the oil properties are situated, whence they derive large incomes in royalties and ground rents.

The trade of Baku, especially the shipping trade, is wholly in Tartar hands, and M. Taghieff, who laid the foundations of his fortune by selling a plot of petroliferous land, owns a whole fleet of steamers; the money-lenders are also all Tartars. But in spite of their wealth and the business ability of a few of them, the great majority are mere primitive savages. To the Armenians above all is the development of Baku due, for they were the first to work the oil-fields on a large scale and on modern lines; they perform a large part of the skilled labour, and among them most of the managers, engineers, as well as many capitalists, are to be found. The British public supplied a considerable share of the capital invested, and there are several Englishmen and other foreigners in prominent positions. The roughest unskilled work (*chornaya rabota*) is performed by the Tartars, Lezghins, and Persians; the skilled work by the Armenians and Russians; the management by Armenians, Russians, and foreigners. Lately, since the disorders, many of the Armenian and Tartar workmen fled, and there has been a considerable influx of Russians in consequence.

The rivalry between the Armenians and the Tartars is of ancient date, and differs little from the general rivalry of the two races in other parts of the Caucasus. The Tartars have always considered Baku as a Tartar city. The Tartar khans have ruled it for centuries, the great bulk of the native population of the whole province is Tartar, and the general character of the country until the recent influx of foreigners was mainly Tartar and Mohammedan. But the Armenians,

with their superior education, their greater intelligence and push, have acquired an increasing influence in the town and the industry, and have edged the Tartars out of many professions. There are only two small Tartar oil firms, although many Tartars are interested in the business. At Baku, where they are numerically inferior, the Armenians form a majority on the town council, as the law does not allow the non-Christian races to have more than half the seats on local bodies. Even in competition with foreigners the Armenians hold their own, for while their interests on the naphtha industry are only 35 per cent. of the total, they are represented by five members out of seven on the *Soviet Siezd* (council of naphtha producers). There are also no Tartars on the Bourse Committee.

One fact which struck me very forcibly during my stay at Baku was the extreme bitterness of the foreign element against the Armenians ; its sympathies, save in two or three instances, seemed wholly on the side of the Tartars. This attitude, I confess, impressed me at the time, and having come to the Caucasus with an open mind, I became inclined to believe that the sufferings of the Armenians had been grossly exaggerated by the European Press, and that the Tartars were a much-maligned people. While a man like Agaieff, on whom I called, was able to make out a good case for the Tartars, Englishmen, Russians, and other outsiders were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the Armenians. Even the common Russian soldiers and policemen, when questioned as to who was to blame for the troubles, replied unhesitatingly, " Armiane." In a place where

racial and religious animosities have reached a white heat it is very difficult to arrive at a fair estimate of the rights and wrongs of a controversy, and one naturally tends to trust in the judgment of foreigners who know the country well but should be free from bias. But on closer investigation I could not help coming to the conclusion that the foreigners were by no means so impartial as they at first appeared. Quite apart from the greater personal charm of the Moslem over the Armenian, the views of foreign financiers and managers are greatly influenced by the fact that they are in close commercial competition with the Armenians. If it were not for them the foreigners would soon have got the whole oil industry into their own hands, instead of being obliged to compete with capable, business-like, and energetic rivals. At the same time the Armenian workmen are much less tractable than the Tartars. They demand better food and higher wages, more comfortable lodgings, baths, reading-rooms, &c., whereas the Tartars are content with anything that is given them. The Armenians belong to workmen's societies, and if they do not get what they want they organize strikes, and even take part in revolutionary movements. The Baku strikes in the summer of 1903 are a case in point. With the Tartars, once you have their own chiefs and the Russian authorities on your side, you can do anything; but with the Armenians you must be careful. The latter, being politically more advanced than the Tartars, are more exacting. Then, since the Government instituted persecutions against them and their Church,

they indulged in political agitation, which, if not primarily directed against the capitalists, did cause them loss by disturbing the general conditions of the town. This explains the attitude of the foreigners, and accounts for their bitterness against the Armenians. One prominent Englishman said to me that he would be glad to see the whole Armenian nation wiped out! He accused them of every conceivable crime, of having been the cause of the whole trouble, of being at the bottom of every revolutionary agitation, and even of having attempted his own life. The evidence adduced in support of these charges was, I am bound to say, quite Caucasian in its inconclusiveness, and I have never subsequently come on a particle of proof of their truth from any source.

So much for the general situation at Baku. The account of the outbreaks I shall reserve for the next chapter.

Baku. Cossack Patrol on the Quay.

Baku. The Official Residence of the Governor-General.

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CHAPTER X

BLOODSHED AND FIRE IN THE OIL CITY

"Gyre-circling Spirits of Fire"

THE story of the various Baku outbreaks has been told in the Press,* but the accounts have been fragmentary and often inaccurate, so that I think it advisable to set forth the events in their proper order. The Baku *pogromy* form part of the bloody drama of Armeno-Tartar hostility, and indeed, the February massacre was the first occasion on which the two races actually fought on a large scale. But they are also part of that wider feud between modern ideas and Asiatic barbarism which is in progress all over the East and in Russia itself. The struggle for freedom now being fought in the Tzar's dominions is but a conflict between the Asiatic and mediæval autocracy and latter-day progress.

It is not easy to obtain reliable information when passions have been roused to such a pitch of savagery as at Baku, and one needs to be very careful in sifting

* Mr. Henry, in his *Baku*, tells the story of the Baku troubles with much detail, but since he wrote fresh facts have come to my notice modifying some of his statements.

the vast mass of evidence supplied to the inquiring stranger, all of it from more or less prejudiced sources, and to clear the ground of false charges and absurd exaggerations. In the first place a few dates must be established so as to make the sequence of events clear. In July, 1903, strikes broke out among the Russian and Armenian workmen on the oil-fields—strikes which were mainly economic but had a political *arrière pensée*, as was the case with other strikes that year in various parts of Russia. They marked, indeed, the beginnings of the revolutionary movement. Some derricks had been set on fire, and the general state of Baku was giving cause for grave anxiety ; General Odintzoff was then Governor. In August the Assistant-Minister of the Interior, General von Wahl, arrived to inquire into the situation.

Prince Golytzin, who had been busy carrying out his anti-Armenian policy, had a few weeks before executed the confiscation of the Church property ; in October his life was attempted. Early in 1904 Prince Nakashidze, a Georgian noble, who as Vice-Governor of Erivan had been actively implicated in the said confiscation, was appointed Governor of Baku. His arrival coincided with a recrudescence of Armeno-Tartar hostility, and an outbreak seemed imminent at that time, so that many Armenians sent their families away from the town. In July, 1904, Prince Golytzin left the Caucasus for good and went to St. Petersburg. Towards the end of the year Prince Nakashidze was summoned to the capital, where he had several conferences with his former chief, and subsequently returned to Baku. Excitement in the

Baku. A Quiet Drive with a Soldier on the Box.

Bibi Eybat Oil Fields. The Ruins.

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oil city and the hatred of the two races increased, and the Governor did nothing to reconcile them. On the contrary, he was perpetually talking of an Armeno-Tartar *pogrom* as imminent; he openly encouraged the Tartars, and treated the Armenians with marked coldness. When a deputation of Armenians came to express their fears and ask him for protection, his only reply was, "Do not you shoot and no one will shoot at you."* In the meanwhile a number of murders of Armenians, attributed to Tartars, had been committed in the Shemakhinka street, and, on the other hand, several mutilated corpses of Tartars, supposed to have been murdered by Armenians, were discovered under the snow which had just melted away. There is a strong presumption that the police was at the bottom of these affairs, which it had instigated with a view to promoting Tartar-Armenian hatred, but I cannot say whether the suspicion is well-founded. The authorities were perpetually telling the Tartars that the Armenians were meditating a massacre of Mussulmans, and that they should be on the *qui vive*. Early in February a Tartar shopkeeper named Gashum Beg, who had assaulted several Armenian boys and girls, was attacked by an Armenian and wounded, but he succeeded in killing his assailant. He was subsequently arrested, and as he was trying to escape a soldier of the escort, also an Armenian, shot him dead.† The assailant proved to be a member of the

* Senator Kuzminsky's report on the February outbreak.

† According to a Tartar version the soldier whispered to Gashum Beg that if he tried to escape he would be allowed to get away, and

revolutionary committee, but the Armenians deny that that association ordered him to kill Gashum Beg, and state that he had been deputed to do so by the family of one of the boys he had assaulted. A relative of Gashum Beg's, a rich Tartar named Babaieff, determined, according to the Tartar custom of vendetta, to avenge him, and a few days later tried to shoot an Armenian in the courtyard of the church, who had been pointed out to him as the man who had killed Gashum Beg ; but he failed, and in the *émeute* which ensued, another Armenian killed him. This deed caused great excitement in the town, and Prince Nakashidze summoned some Armenian journalists to his Chancery, and delivered them a long discourse on the dangers of an Armeno-Tartar *pogrom*. He declared that if the Tartars did rise against the Armenians he would be powerless to defend them, as he had not enough troops, and the police were unreliable, many of them being Tartars. In fact one of the said Armenians told me that parts of this speech corresponded almost word for word with the report which the Governor made after the massacre, which suggests that he had foreseen the whole affair.

The body of Babaieff was carried in procession through the Tartar quarter, and exposed to view. Had Prince Nakashidze wished to prevent trouble he would have stopped the procession ; the sight of the murdered man roused the Moslems to fury, and on the 19th of February they proceeded to

the moment he did so fired on him. The Armenians say that the idea of escape was not suggested.

massacre every Armenian they came across. The Armenians defended themselves as best they could, but the Tartars were much more numerous and better armed. The authorities remained absolutely passive, and to the frenzied appeals for help which Prince Nakashidze was constantly receiving from hard-pressed Armenians besieged in their own houses, he replied that he had no troops and could do nothing, although as a matter of fact he had 2,000 men. He was seen driving about the town openly encouraging the Tartars, and slapping them on the back; and on one occasion, happening to see some too officious soldiers disarming a Tartar, he ordered them to give the man back his rifle, which of course they did! M. Adamoff, one of the richest Armenians in Baku, was besieged for three days in his own house, and being a first-rate shot he killed a number of his assailants with his own hand; at last he and his son were shot dead, the Tartars set fire to the house, rushed in and butchered all the inmates. A similar fate befell Lalaieff, another rich Armenian, who defended himself until ammunition gave out, after which his house was burnt and the whole household killed. To his appeals for help the Governor made no reply, but came himself when all was over.

At last on the fourth day, when both sides were exhausted, the *pogrom* came to an end, after some 300 to 400 people had been killed.* The Tartar Sheikh-ul-Islam arrived from Tiflis and paraded the town in company with the Armenian bishop, and a

* According to the official accounts the Armenians killed were 218, the Tartars 126; possibly the numbers were somewhat larger.

sort of peace was patched up. The Sheikh-ul-Islam, a worthy, well-meaning old man, but without much influence over the more turbulent elements of his people, preached a peace sermon in the Armenian cathedral, while the bishop preached in a similar strain in the mosque. The cooler heads on both sides were beginning to see that the chief responsibility lay with the Government, but the race hatred was now so bitter that no lasting reconciliation was possible.

For some months things remained comparatively quiet, although isolated murders were very frequent. Both Armenians and Tartars armed themselves, but the former did so on a larger scale, for they had had such experience of the Government's hostility that they felt they now had only themselves to rely on. The revolutionary committee displayed great zeal in collecting money both from the Armenians and the foreign firms who paid it blackmail, and in smuggling arms and explosives into the town from Moscow. The Tartars, thinking themselves secure in the Government's favour, were less active. An official inquiry into the outbreak was conducted by Senator Kuzminsky, but its findings were not published until early in this year, and none of the guilty were punished. The Armenians, however, took vengeance into their own hands, and on May 24th Prince Nakashidze was blown up by a bomb. As for his own guilt in this matter there can, I think, be no doubt whatever. The direct responsibility of Prince Golytzin is more questionable, for he had left the Caucasus several months before the Baku outbreak ;

After the Fires at Bibi Eybat.

Baku. Ruined Derricks at Bibi Eybat.

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but the troubles were unquestionably the direct outcome of his own policy, and he may have given suggestions to Prince Nakashidze when the latter was in the capital.

The impunity of the Baku massacres encouraged the Tartars in other parts of the country. An account of the outbreak at Nakhitchevan, which was the outcome of the Baku disturbance, will be given in another Chapter. In the summer things began to appear critical at Shusha, a town of 35,000 inhabitants, situated high up among the mountains of the Elizavetpol Government. The population is equally divided between Tartars and Armenians, the latter occupying the upper part of the town. The fighting in other places was producing dangerous excitement also at Shusha, although a conciliation committee had been formed, which managed to keep things quiet for some time. About the middle of July a number of Armenians, travelling in omnibuses between Ievlakh (a station on the Tiflis-Baku line) and Shusha, were set upon by Tartars and plundered. The Shusha revolutionary committee and the more violent elements of the Armenians urged that it was now time to attack the Tartars, but for a few weeks more peaceful councils prevailed, although both sides were preparing for the struggle.

Throughout August fresh collisions occurred between members of the two races along the Ievlakh-Shusha road, especially in the neighbourhood of Agdam. On the 20th a Tartar was murdered at Shusha, for which the Armenians were held responsible, and on the same day a fight occurred at Vank.

On the 29th three Armenians were murdered near Shusha, and at midday another came into the town showing the wounds inflicted on him by the Tartars. In the afternoon firing on a large scale began, which appears to have been started by the Armenians. An attempt was made to bring about a meeting between the Armenian Bishop Ashost and a prominent Tartar named Javat Aga Jehanghir and other notables of both communities to restore peace. But the meeting never took place, as neither side trusted the other. Shooting went on uninterruptedly for three days, and on the 31st incendiarism began. The Armenians set fire to the few Tartar houses in their own quarter; the Tartars did the same to the Armenian quarter. A wind favoured the flames, and soon some four hundred houses, including all the best in the place, as well as the shops and the industrial establishments, were blazing ruins. The Armenian church of Akuliatz, which had been captured by the Tartars, was desecrated in an unspeakable way and used as one of their chief strongholds. Thousands of armed and mounted Tartars flocked to Shusha from the neighbourhood, but the Armenians held a strong position commanding the chief road by which they came, and thus prevented most of them from entering the town. On the 1st of September a second attempt at conciliation was more successful, and it was arranged that a procession of members of both races, headed by Javat Aga and Bishop Ashost, should visit the Armenian quarter, and another, led by the Archimandrite Ter-Mikelian, the Tartar Casi, and the Russian Vice-Governor of Elizavetpol, who had just arrived,

should visit the Tartar quarter. But although this programme was duly carried out, firing recommenced that same night with redoubled fury. The Tartars determined to destroy the Armenian quarter and attacked it vigorously, but the Armenians replied with a heavy fire, threw some bombs, and even produced an old cannon, which burst after a few shots, but caused great consternation among the assailants. The Vice-Governor then appealed to the Tartars, "not as an official, but as a man and their guest," to put an end to the bloodshed. On the 2nd the Moslem chiefs sent a messenger to the Armenians, and finally a peace conference was held at the Russian church. Tartars and Armenians publicly embraced one another and swore eternal friendship—until next time. Prisoners were exchanged, as between properly constituted belligerents. The number of killed and wounded amounted to about 300, of whom two-thirds were Tartars, for the Armenians were better shots and also enjoyed the advantage of position. The damage is estimated at from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 roubles. The troops, of whom 350 were available, seem to have done nothing at all while the fighting was going on, but the military band performed to celebrate the conciliation!

The news of the Shusha fighting spread all over the country, and increased the agitation at Baku, which was now to witness a replica on a larger scale of the February massacres. After the murder of Prince Nakashidze martial law was proclaimed, and a Governor-General * was appointed in the person of

* The Russians apply the title of *General-Gubiernator* both to a Governor-General of an important region which includes several

General Fadeieff, the victor of Kars. The new Viceroy of the Caucasus was much better disposed towards the Armenians than his predecessor, and the Church property had now been restored. But many of the minor officials and police were still Golytzin's creatures, and at Baku the authorities refused to recognize the danger of the situation. Only a few days before the September outbreak General Fadeieff issued 16,000 permits to carry arms, and when a committee of oil producers called on him to represent the seriousness of the situation and to ask for protection, his Excellency complacently replied that everything would go off quietly, and that all was for the best in the best of all possible Bakus. General Fadeieff is not accused of having promoted the second outbreak, nor of having encouraged the Tartars, but he took no precautions to prevent trouble, although the garrison had been increased to 6,000 men.

The Social-Democrats, chiefly Russian workmen, now began to agitate again and make insistent demands for political liberty and economic improvements. The Armenian and Socialist committees worked apart, but they both had a common desire for a constitutional Government. The Armenian workmen were also demanding improvements in the conditions of labour, and their committees, although primarily political, voiced these demands. About the end of August a tramway strike broke out and the

governments (*gubiernia*), such as Poland, Finland, or the North-West provinces, and to a military governor appointed to carry out martial law.

service was suspended for a few days. Then by order of the Governor-General it was resumed, and soldiers were placed on the cars for protection. The strikers made a demonstration, a few shots were fired, and some Tartars were hit by accident. Further firing on a larger scale broke out in other parts of the town on the 2nd of September. The Tartar and Armenian quarters were now separated, as I said before, by a row of empty houses, so that Baku was divided into two armed camps. Fighting soon became more general, and a few houses were set on fire. But nothing very serious occurred in Baku itself, for General Fadeieff, once the disorders had actually broken out, did his best to stop them, and his troops prevented the Tartar villagers, who had assembled in great numbers outside, from coming into the town.

Far worse was the situation on the oil-fields. Large bodies of Tartars, as soon as the news of the Baku fighting arrived, gathered together and conferred with their chiefs at Balakhany and Ramany, where they were joined by others from the villages.* The Armenians, expecting an attack, concentrated in certain positions. During the night the Tartars set fire to the Armenian oil properties at Balakhany and Ramany; the derricks, being of wood and impregnated with naphtha, burnt like tinder, and the adjoining buildings were soon in flames. The fires also spread to other non-Armenian properties, and soon a huge cloud of smoke hung like a pall over the

* There are several Tartar villages on the Apsheron peninsula among the oil-fields, and others just outside.

oil-fields, with tongues of fire darting up from the burning derricks. Desperate fighting took place wherever Tartars and Armenians met, but this time the former did not have such an easy job as in February. The attack on the Armenians at the Baku Naphtha Producers' Association was beaten back with loss, and numbers of Tartars were shot down by the Cossacks at the Va Wotan works. More fighting occurred on the 5th near the Sabuntchy hospital, where 2,000 Armenians and some Cossacks were collected, but it was not of a very serious nature. Numbers of isolated Armenians were caught by the Tartars while trying to escape and shot or cut to pieces. Some were induced to leave their hiding places by promises of safety, and then brutally murdered. At the Melikoff works several Armenians who had taken refuge in a house were burnt to death with kerosene pumped in by the Tartars. No quarter was given on either side, and neither age nor sex was spared. But amid these deeds of savage cruelty there shine also deeds of magnificent heroism. The way in which some Armenians brought women and children to places of safety or got water and provisions for the besieged under a heavy fire was beyond all praise. Three Englishmen were besieged at Zabrat several days, until relieved by the British Vice-Consul, Mr. Leslie Urquhart; but their danger was, of course, much less than that of the Armenians, for the Tartars had no feeling against any foreigners.

In the meanwhile fighting and incendiarism had broken out on the Bibi Eybat oil-fields. The Pitoieff, Mantasheff, and other Armenian properties were

BAKU. CORPSES IN THE CEMETERY.

Photo by a Baku Photographer.

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set alight, and the properties of the English firms "Oleum" and B. O. R. N. were also damaged. As the waterworks buildings were on fire it was impossible to put out the flames, and the detachments of Cossacks and sailors from the Caspian flotilla were unable to keep the Tartars in check. Several vessels full of armed Tartars appeared off the coast, but most of them were prevented from landing; one of these ships was said to have come from Persia. The slaughter at Bibi Eybat was much less than at Balakhany, and only a few Armenians were murdered. Various properties were invaded by Tartars, but most of the Armenians, who were not numerous, succeeded in escaping.

At last reinforcements began to arrive from Tiflis and Rostoff, and artillery was got into position, both in the oil-fields and in the town; the troops acted with considerable energy, greatly to the disgust of the Tartars, who expected to find them on their side, or at all events that they should remain neutral. The Governor-General issued a decree that if shots were fired from any house it was to be instantly demolished with cannon. Order was thus gradually restored, although excitement was still so high that it was doubted whether it was not merely a lull before a new storm. The total number of killed amounted to about 600, and the tale of murders continued with undiminished vigour even after things had quieted down. As usual the authorities committed many mistakes, which tended to increase rather than allay the disturbances. A large house, in which the British and Italian Vice-Consulates and a number

of offices and apartments are, was riddled with shots simply on a vague rumour, which afterwards proved untrue, that somebody had fired a revolver from one of its windows. When an Armeno-Tartar reconciliation committee called on the Governor-General with a view to concerting measures for peace, he kept them for nearly two hours talking about his own exploits at the siege of Kars! Throughout the whole affair it was clear that the authorities did not really control the situation, and they could only pray for the reconciliation of the belligerents. They expected that Tartars and Armenians should make peace while they stood by to see fair play, but they were almost always incapable of punishing infractions of the agreement, so that public order came to be dependent on the wishes of the two races.

When I arrived at Baku the flames had burnt themselves out, and fighting had ceased. Over 10,000 soldiers were in the town and immediate neighbourhood, and others were expected. No one was allowed out after 8 p.m., but every night shots were heard, and every morning fresh corpses were found. Some of the oil producers wished to recommence work, but the precarious situation rendered this impossible. The Armenians dared not start from fear of the Tartars, and the Tartars from fear of the Armenians; many of the Russian and Persian workmen had fled in terror, and those who remained refused to return to the oil-fields unless they were properly protected. Both the Armenian and the Russian revolutionary committees issued proclamations stating that work must not recommence until

the lives of the men were guaranteed and their general conditions improved. The Armenian committee, indeed, threatened to murder all the managers who should start work before these demands were complied with. The English were particularly incensed at these threats, and one of them actually accused the Armenian oil producers of having inspired the menaces because, being themselves unable to begin work, they did not wish their foreign competitors to get ahead of them. I could not obtain any evidence as to the truth of this preposterous charge. On the other hand, the Armenian paper, the *Baku*, made equally wild accusations against some English managers, who, they said, had handed over their Armenian employees to the Tartars, lest the latter should set fire to the properties. Every day there was some fresh excitement, meetings of revolutionary committees and of industrial associations, threats, charges and counter-charges, wild rumours, arrests, discoveries of bombs, threatening proclamations, violent articles in the *Baku* and the *Kaspii*, and general panic.

I visited the premises of several oil companies at Bibi Eybat soon after the fires, and the spectacle presented simply defies description. The road from Baku to the oil-fields is flanked by a series of low sheds, workmen's cottages, and small shops. On nearing Bibi Eybat the derricks begin to appear—curious pyramid-shaped wooden towers. A few larger buildings mark the entrance to the various oil properties. On entering the first of these a most appalling scene of destruction met my eyes. Out of the 200

derricks of Bibi Eybat, 118 had been destroyed, and the majority of the other buildings were heaps of black ruins. The whole area was covered with *débris* and wreckage, thick iron bars snapped asunder like sticks, or twisted by the fire into the shape of coiled-up serpents and fantastic monsters; great sheets of iron torn to shreds as though they had been paper, broken machinery, blackened beams, fragments of cogged wheels, pistons, burst boilers, miles of steel wire ropes, all piled up in the wildest confusion, workmen's barracks, offices, and engine-houses razed to the ground. Everywhere streams of thick-oozing naphtha flowed down channels, or formed slimy pools of dull greenish liquid; the whole atmosphere was charged with the smell of oil. A few workmen were going about trying to clear away some of the rubbish, or find bits of iron-work that might be of use. It was more like some frightful nightmare than a reality.

Yet when one comes to inquire into the actual damages they do not seem to be quite so enormous as one would think, or as they were at first estimated. The earliest reports put the figure at £15,000,000; subsequent estimates reduced it to £10,000,000, £5,000,000, £3,000,000; and now, according to the most reliable, it cannot much exceed £2,000,000 or £2,500,000. Of this amount a little over one-tenth represents the English losses. Outsiders unacquainted with the conditions of the industry imagined that once the oil wells were set alight they went on burning until the whole of the underground deposit was consumed. But as a matter of fact nothing of the kind could possibly happen. The oil has to be extracted from a

Baku. Tartar Workmen.

Baku. Armenian Workmen Outside the Hôtel de l'Europe.

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considerable depth—500 to 1,500 feet—so that only what is actually on the surface can burn at all. Of course all the woodwork of the derricks burnt very easily; machinery and buildings were thus destroyed, and the huge naphtha and kerosene reservoirs were also burnt. The greater part of the capital invested in the oil trade is spent in sinking the wells, and so of course is not lost. Much of the machinery too was old and obsolete, and would have had to be scrapped in any case in a year or two, so that its destruction was a less serious loss than one might think. Far graver was that caused by the cessation of production, for with the anarchy then prevailing it was impossible to do anything for some months, and even now the production is less than it is in normal times.* Dearth of labour is one of the chief difficulties; the workmen demand higher wages and that their lives should be insured, for which heavy premiums must be paid. Even so it is very hard to get men to come at all. The whole industry has been thrown on its beam ends, and it requires drastic remedies to be replaced on a satisfactory basis once more. If the Government were in a position to guarantee order, prosperity could be restored to Baku in a very short time. The large oil producers can afford to wait until things improve, and no doubt by raising the price of oil they can more than recoup themselves for their losses apart from any

* Practically there was no production in September and October; in November work recommenced, but on a small scale, and the railway strikes in that month and in December again paralyzed the industry. In January 30,000,000 puds were produced against 50,000,000 per month in normal times.

compensation they may get from the Government. But the smaller *industriels* and the shareholders are in sore straits, and many who were comparatively rich men are now ruined.

MOUNT ARARAT FROM THE NORTH.

Photo by Kiknadze of Erivan.

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CHAPTER XI

THE LAND OF ARARAT

UNTIL a few years ago the only railway of importance in Transcaucasia was the trunk line across the isthmus from Baku to Batum. But in 1902 a new and important line was completed going from Tiflis in a southerly direction. It had two main objects, one wholly strategic, the other partly strategic and partly economic. The first was to establish railway connection with the fortress of Kars, Russia's advanced post towards Asia Minor; the other was the "peaceful penetration" of Persia. The Kars branch was completed first; the Persian frontier has been reached only a few months ago. The new route is an interesting one in many ways. It passes through some of the most beautiful scenery in the Caucasus; at its culminating point it is higher than any railway in Europe, and is indeed one of the highest in existence; it traverses the high tableland of Armenia, which is historically one of the most interesting countries in the world; it skirts the foot of Mount Ararat, the view of which is worth the whole journey from London to Erivan; and lastly it takes us to the Persian border,

and will eventually be the means of opening up Northern Persia to Western influences.

The distance from Tiflis to Erivan is 352 versts, or about 230 miles, but the train takes sixteen hours to cover it. Russian railways are proverbially slow, the Caucasian lines are the slowest in Russia, and the Tiflis-Erivan line is the slowest in the Caucasus.

For the first few miles the line descends the Kura valley and then abruptly turns to the south towards the mountain ranges enclosing the Armenian plateau. We enter the long deep gorge of Sambak in which the train is engulfed for many hours. The steep hillsides are well wooded, with splendid forests now ablaze with the most brilliant hues of autumn, and the swirling Dabeda Chai roars down below. The villages are few and far between, but there are on every hill-top and in every open space remains of old castles and picturesque monasteries and churches, in some places of whole towns, for this country, now so thinly inhabited, was once highly civilized and well populated. There is something attractively mysterious about these forgotten lost cities, half buried in the forest; they must have witnessed many a scene of dramatic horror, for horrible Caucasian history has ever been, a record of fierce fighting, savage passions, black treachery, blind fanaticism, sublime heroism, always ending in blood and destruction, from the earliest times down to the present day, and the Caucasian book of blood is not closed yet—far from it.

At Karakliss the gorge opens out into more smiling scenery; there is bright sunlight on the woods, and

gleaming streams, and cool greensward. Under a more civilized and progressive *régime* this spot would have soon been turned into a pleasant *Kurort* for the people of burning Tiflis to fly to in August, with hotels, villas, shops, and bands. As it is there is nothing but a small village and some cottages where rooms are let in the summer. The state of security leaves much to be desired; brigandage flourishes, and a few days after I passed through, a train was held up and a large sum of money carried away. From Karakliss a road leads to Delijan and on to Lake Gok Chai, the largest and most beautiful in the Caucasus. The line now ascends still steeper heights, and vegetation on the mountain slopes soon disappears. As we proceed southwards the Armenian type and costume becomes more and more predominant.

The stations are built of stone and seem to be of extraordinary solidity. At one of them I got out to take a photograph of a picturesque group of blue-clad, fur-capped Armenians. They were pleased and amused by my performance, but when I returned to my compartment, I was followed by a gendarme. Very politely and deferentially he asked me what I was photographing; I replied with truth that I had been snapping *Armianskie tipy*.

"But photographing is forbidden on this line."

"Why?" I asked.

"I do not know, but I suppose for some political reason."

"I am very sorry, but I did not know."

"Will you give me the plate?"

"Alas!" I replied, "but I have no plates." (I only

used films.) That was quite beyond him. He did not know what *plionki* (films) were. I tried to explain: "It is absolutely impossible for me to take out that film until I have finished the whole twelve, and I am only at No. 5."

"Very well; will you kindly tell me your name, your father's name, your profession, your nationality, your habitual abode, where you are going, and what hotel you will stay in?"

I supplied these details, which were duly set down in a notebook which the uniformed gentleman kept under his cap; he then saluted and retired, and I heard no more of the affair. The real reason of the prohibition is no doubt the fact that the Tiflis-Kars line is a strategic railway and is treated as though it were a continuous fortress; no objections were raised to my taking photos on the Alexandropol-Erivan-Nakhitchevan branch. This was my first and only collision with the celebrated Russian police during the whole of my tour. It was typical of Russian methods that my violation of the law should have had no consequences. In Germany if a thing is *strengsten verboten* it really is *verboten*, and woe to the man who disregards the warning. But the Russian equivalent, *strogo vospreshtchaietsia* is a much milder prohibition, and if you talk nicely to the guardians of the law, or are a stranger, or a celebrity, or ready to pay a small bribe, you may do what you like and have no further trouble.

The train creeps up the mountain side, enters a long tunnel, in the middle of which is the highest point along the line (7,355 feet above the sea), and then

ARMENIAN TYPES.

(The Photo for which I was nearly arrested.)

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descends on to the Shirak plateau. We are now in the true Armenia, the original home of the Haik people. On all sides we are encircled by a barrier of bare, forbidding rocks, but the valleys are to some extent cultivated. The air is delicious, and quite cold in the early morning, but it gets very hot in the middle of the day in spite of the great height and the season of the year—we are now at the beginning of October. Brown undulating plateaux, naked grey rocks piled up by volcanic action, patches of trees and grass, and fields of corn. Then suddenly through a gap in the nearer mountains, the blue-grey snow-capped summit of the Alagöz rises up 13,436 feet high. Besides Ararat it is the only mountain with eternal snows in Russian Armenia. By a series of sharp curves the line descends to Alexandropol, a large town and fortress, which is the junction where the Kars and Erivan branches meet. I did not stop here on my way out but pushed on to Erivan. The landscape becomes ever broader and larger, as the vast rolling uplands spread out, an endless vista of golden earth, earth and atmosphere of that shimmering hue only seen in the East. Then suddenly through another break in the circle to the south we see right across the plain, and Ararat appears in all its glory. I have never seen such an imposing mountain before or since, in the Alps or in the Caucasus. It rises sheer up out of an immense plain, which forms an exquisite foreground like a rich Persian carpet, of green, brown, yellow and red grasses, wastes of golden sand, and oases of poplars and vineyards; the great mountain shows up like some airy structure of a dream, against the

parched plain. The circle of heights framing the picture never rises to more than 10,000 feet, while Ararat is 16,916 and dominates them all. It is this isolation which makes it so magnificent. The great peaks of the Alps are surrounded by other peaks nearly as high; Mont Blanc is but *primus inter pares*, and even the bolder form of the Matterhorn is challenged by powerful rivals. But Ararat is an undisputed autocrat, towering far above the pigmies around him, who serve but to exalt and glorify him. For weeks I lived in sight of this mighty giant; every day he assumed a new aspect, and I was never tired of feasting my eyes on his kingly beauty.

Ararat is formed of two summits, unequal in height and different in form; Great Ararat, a vast, rounded mass, purply blue in colour, diaphanous and velvety in texture, surmounted by a magnificent dome of ice and snow, with glaciers creeping down the sides; and Little Ararat, a sharp peak only tipped with snow at the summit. Between the two is a deep depression, where the post of Sardar Bulagh ("the Governor's Fountain") is situated, the best point whence to begin the ascent.

"But most of all," writes Mr. H. F. B. Lynch, "as we realize the vision, which in the noblest shapes of natural architecture, the dome and the pyramid, fills the immense length of the southern horizon and soars above the landscape of the plain, the essential unity of the vast edifice and the correspondence of the parts between themselves are imprinted upon the mind. If Little Ararat, rising on the flank of the giant mountain, may recall, both in form and in position, the

minaret which, beside the vault of a Byzantine temple, bears witness to a conflicting creed, this contrast is softened in the natural structure by the similarity of the processes which have produced the two neighbours, and by their intimate connection with one another as constituents in a single plan."

Ararat is of volcanic origin, and although as a volcano it is now extinct, there are vast deposits of hot water within its subterraneous hollows, and at times torrents of boiling mud have been ejected, dealing death and destruction to the villages on the mountain slopes. Earthquakes, too, are very frequent in this region, one of the most terrible being that of 1840, in which the Armenian village of Akhuri was completely destroyed. The halo of legend and historic tradition with which the mountain is surrounded invests it with mystic sanctity. The story of the Ark is still a living belief among the Armenian and Mohammedan races inhabiting the Ararat country; the Armenians, indeed, believe themselves to be the first race of men which grew up in the world after the Flood. The town of Nakhitchevan is said to have been founded by Noah immediately after leaving the Ark, and its name is supposed to mean "the first home." The Persian name for Ararat, Koh-i-Nuh, means Noah's mountain. Almost the whole history of the Armenian people centres round Mount Ararat, which stands now at the confines of the three great States—Russia, Persia, and Turkey—and was in the past the meeting-point of Persians, Turks, and Armenians. Its various names—Ararat meaning high, Masis or sublime—are

symbolical of the overpowering impression which it has always made on the people who dwelt in its shadow.

On climbers, too, it has exercised a great fascination, and has been ascended several times; the first ascent was by the German, Parrot, in 1829; Professor Abich ascended it in 1845, the Russian General Khodzko in 1850, and remained five days on the summit in order to carry out a survey. Mr. James Bryce and Mr. H. F. D. Lynch are among the best-known English climbers who achieved the feat. It is said not to be a very difficult climb for an experienced mountaineer, but it is extremely long and tiring.

Towards evening I reached Erivan, the terminus of one branch of the line (the Nakhitchevan-Djulfa branch starts off from a station before Erivan). Immediately on my arrival I felt that there was something up. There was excitement among the station officials, agitated soldiers and gendarmes were rushing about, and I had considerable difficulty in procuring a vehicle. I drove towards the town (the station, as is usual in Russia, is several miles outside), and on two occasions I found the way blocked by patrols, so that the cab had to make a detour. On demanding the reason I was told that there was an Armeno-Tartar disturbance. At last the inn was reached—the Hôtel d'Orient. Here a crowd of soldiers, policemen, Cossacks, and others were gathered, and two sentries with fixed bayonets stood on guard at the door. This was due to the presence of Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who

Erivan. Carts in the Bazar.

Erivan. Shops.

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had been nominated Governor-General of Erivan since the previous June. As his appointment was only a temporary one he had no fixed residence, but was staying at the hotel. It was curious to see Russian military proclamations posted about the town bearing the signature "Napoleon."

The whole town was in a state of tumult, as the Tartars and Armenians had begun fighting that very afternoon, and Prince Napoleon was busy restoring order. I had an introduction to an Armenian gentleman, who was Inspector of Taxes, and I wished to call on him immediately, so as to learn something of the situation. I asked the hotel porter for his address, but was told that I could not go to the house, as I should have to pass through the Tartar quarter where fighting was still in progress. I tried to get a policeman to escort me, but without success; then I came on a group of peasants and townsmen going in that direction, and I followed them up the Akstafievskaya, the principal street of Erivan. I had not walked a hundred yards when a detachment of dragoons blocked the way. Expostulation was useless, as the soldiers began to ride their horses on to the side-walk, so I had to return to the inn. However, I managed to go out later, but the excitement was soon over, troops appeared everywhere at once, and artillery paraded the streets ostentatiously all night. A few shots were heard now and again, but by 8 p.m. the band was playing the "Cake Walk" and other cheerful music in the park, and the less timid part of the population went out to listen to the strains.

For over a year the Erivan province had been in a state of ferment, first on account of the *Kultur-Kampf* between the Russian Government and the Armenian Church, and later on account of the Armeno-Tartar feud. While Prince Nakashidze was Vice-Governor there had been the beginning of an outbreak, but it came to nothing. There was a small *pogrom* in March, 1905, and a second on June 5th and 6th, in which over fifty people had been killed. A number of incapable generals and officials had tried in vain to restore order, until Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff commissioned Prince Napoleon, who had served for many years in the Russian army, and had recently been in command of the cavalry division at Tiflis, to take charge of the unruly district. His predecessors had, on the usual bureaucratic system, always done the wrong thing in the wrong way, and in their zeal to carry out Prince Golytzin's policy, had made war on the Armenians and secretly encouraged the Tartars to attack them; then they found that the Tartars had got out of hand. Prince Napoleon acted differently, and exercised great severity in repressing outbursts, but also absolute impartiality. Since his arrival Erivan itself had been peaceful, but there had been trouble in the Zangezur district between Nakhitchevan and Shusha. After the Shusha fighting 8,000 Tartars, together with 1,200 Kurds of the Zangezur district, and 500 from over the Persian frontier, attacked Gerussi and other Armenian villages. On the 6th of September they had a sharp encounter with the Cossacks at Alikuliksend; a party of Cossacks had gone to Minkend to protect the Armenians,

but on being assured by the Tartar mayor and the *pristav* that there was no danger, went to Khansovar, which was being attacked. As soon as they departed the Tartars fell on the Armenians, killing 140 and wounding 40, before the eyes of the *pristav*, who did not interfere. Prince Napoleon made a rapid tour through the disturbed district, visiting Gerussi on September 13th, accompanied by a small mounted force, restored order for the time being, and wrote a report to the Viceroy, in which he stigmatized the Tartars and severely blamed several district governors and officials. He had now come back to Erivan, when the riots broke out here also, for the third time this year.

It was the 1st of October, a Sunday, and being a fine day, numbers of Armenians had gone out to picnic in the vineyards outside the town and wile away the hot hours eating grapes and drinking wine. Unfortunately they imbibed too much strong liquor, became lively and reckless, and began to play with their rifles—no one dares venture outside the walls unarmed. A group of Tartars with a cart happened to be passing by, and the somewhat inebriated Armenians proceeded to fire at them. One Tartar was killed and a second severely wounded, whereupon the survivors fled, carrying the dead man and the wounded one with them (Tartars never leave their dead behind, for it is considered shameful that the *giaours* should see that one of the Faithful has been killed). The corpse was taken into Erivan and exposed in the Tartar bazar, as was done with that of Babaieff at Baku. This spectacle aroused the

Mohammedans to fury, and they determined to avenge their murdered brother by a general massacre of Armenians. At about five o'clock a number of them armed with revolvers and *kinjals* rushed down to the boulevard, a wide open space in the middle of the town, shaded with large forest trees, where Armenians were disporting themselves peacefully in their best Sunday clothes, ignorant of what had occurred in the vineyards. A violent dispute between Tartars and Armenians broke out, and insults and accusations were bandied about. A Tartar was the first to discharge his revolver, and then the fat was in the fire, and bullets began to fly in all directions, under the very windows of the hotel where Prince Napoleon was residing. The shooting must have been somewhat wild, for although some fifty or sixty shots were fired, only half a dozen men seem to have been hit. In the meanwhile the sound of firing aroused the rest of the town, and wherever Tartars and Armenians met shots were exchanged, and several people were killed. The affair might have developed into a serious outbreak, accompanied by a heavy death-roll, but for the energy of Prince Napoleon. As soon as he heard the shots, and saw from his windows what was up, he called a couple of *aides-de-camp*, descended into the street, and visited on foot all the parts of the town where there was fighting. He had, however, taken the preliminary precaution of issuing orders to his troops, ever since his arrival at Erivan, that the instant trouble broke out they were to occupy certain points of vantage, so that each detachment took up its prescribed position at once.

Erivan. Tartars in the Bazar.

Erivan. In the Bazar.

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The Prince inspected the infantry gathered in the square near the Russian Church, and delivered them a speech in which he ordered them to shoot any one whom they saw firing, or who, being armed, refused to give up his weapons at the first summons. "And when you shoot," he concluded, "shoot to kill, and not merely to frighten." The artillery was brought out with orders to demolish any house from which shots were fired, but its services were not needed. All night it rumbled about the streets, and this was its chief function. But by five o'clock all was over, and only a few stray shots were heard in the night. Thus with a little energy and foresight, and strict impartiality, order was restored in a few hours. The whole affair forms a striking contrast to what occurred in other places, where bungling generals and fatuous officials allowed small *émeutes* to develop into alarming disturbances. The next day the shops remained closed during the morning, but in the afternoon, one after another, the iron shutters began to go up, and on the second day after the disturbances the town resumed its normal aspect.

When the interest caused by the outbreak had subsided, I had leisure to explore the town of Erivan. It is certainly one of the most lovely spots in the Caucasus. The splendid view of Ararat, which one enjoys from almost every elevated spot or open space, is alone enough to entitle it to a high place among beautiful cities. The giant mountain dominates the whole town, the whole countryside. The finest point of view is from the terrace of the residence of the Armenian bishop, for one sees it rise up beyond a

foreground of delightful vineyards and well-watered hillsides, the famous gardens of Erivan. The history of the town goes very far back. According to local tradition it was built, like Nakhitchevan, by Noah soon after the Deluge. It is first mentioned by reliable authorities in the IX. century, but it probably existed already in the VII. From the XVI. century onwards there are frequent allusions to it, for it was a perpetual bone of contention between the Turks and the Persians, each of whom held it and lost it in turn. At the beginning of the XIX. century it belonged to Persia, and the first attempt which the Russians made to capture it, in 1804, failed. But in 1827, during the Russo-Persian war, General Paskievich shelled it, and then marched in without much difficulty—whence his title of *Erivansky*.

The population is about 28,000, almost equally divided between Tartars and Armenians. The former are the richer of the two races, and own large estates in the district, but hoard their wealth; the latter carry on trade. The prosperity of the Erivan depends on the agricultural products of the neighbourhood, of which wine and cotton are the most important. There is a brandy factory belonging to an Armenian. The town is also a centre of trade from various parts of Russia, Armenia and Persia.

Erivan is thoroughly Oriental in character, although since the Russian occupation many new houses have been built. There is a long, broad, dusty street, the Akstafievskaya, which starts from the boulevard and follows a north-easterly direction, ascending towards a hill flanked by two-storied houses, mostly of the

usual Russian style. South of the boulevard is the Orthodox Church, a hideous stone structure adorned with bulging domes, and then a wide open square with rows of booths on one side and low garden walls on the other. Here the market is held, and there is a constant passing to and fro of country carts, cabs, and men riding smart little Tartar horses, which are here much handsomer than the smaller mountain ponies of Georgia and the Central Caucasus; following the continuation of the Akstafievskaya we ascend a picturesque street of Tartar shops to another market-place, where groups of camels are usually to be seen. From the first market-place a number of narrow lanes lead into the Tartar bazar, a rabbit warren of dark entries and cut-throat dens. An inveterate collector might no doubt unearth some curios out of these gloomy and ill-smelling depths, but I could see nothing of a tempting nature, and the bazar seemed poorer than others I had visited. But the vaulted passages themselves, redolent of all the mysteries of the East, with their dark curtained shops, the crowds of Tartars clad in long blue tunics, and the green turbans of the *mullahs* passing up and down, are very attractive. In one small open room I came upon a teacher imparting religious instruction to about a dozen little boys; he was droning out his lesson in a sing-song, monotonous voice, swaying to and fro. In another den a barber was shaving a victim to his last hair. At every turn were coffee and tea stalls, but those strange and delicious sweetmeats of the East which I had tasted at Constantinople and Sarajevo were not to be found.

In queer galleries and tiny courts huge ungainly camels were reposing. Then through the foul-smelling bazar you come out suddenly on the great mosque called the Gok Djami. It is a good deal more than a mosque; it is a long quadrangle containing several places of worship and a number of cells, schools, and offices of the Moslem religious administration. It is not very ancient, having been built by Nadir Shah in the XVIII. century, but it is handsome. It is devoted to Shiah worship, although in the past the Erivan mosques changed from Sunni to Shiah and from Shiah to Sunni according as the town was held by Turkey or Persia. The entrance is through a doorway flanked by a minaret adorned with coloured tiles, leading into a large rectanglar court round a garden of quite Arabian Nights' fascination. In the middle is a pool surrounded by immense elms casting deep shadows over the tranquil water. Stately, dignified Mohammedans in flowing robes walk slowly about or sit by the side of the fountain, drinking tea and smoking long pipes. At each end of the quadrangle is a mosque; the one nearest the bazar entrance is the larger of the two. It is surmounted by a tile-covered dome, and the interior is also adorned with beautiful Persian tiles and paintings of arabesques interlaced with human figures and animals. The front, however, being open to the court and the floor on a raised platform, the general effect is that of an open-air *café concert*. The smaller mosque at the opposite end is similar in plan, and the paintings are even finer. Along the two sides of the quadrangle are rows of cells where the *mullahs* and *imams* reside.

Erivan. In the Courtyard of the Mosque called Gök Djami.

Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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Each apartment consists of a group of two or three cells, as bare as possible, with no furniture, but one or two rugs and a divan which is part of the structure. The only light is admitted through the door on to the court. On leaving the mosque I approached the minaret, and knowing that there would be a fine view from the top, I asked an old *muezzin* to show me the way. This he was rather reluctant to do, but he eventually found the key and opened the door. With difficulty I ascended the narrow, winding stairs (I often wonder if there are any fat *muezzins*), and admired the view from the summit. My guide was obviously in a state of nerves; he stuck closely to one side of the balcony and tried to prevent me from going round to the other. The reason of his anxiety, he explained, was the fact that there were some Armenian houses close by, and that the sight of a Tartar on the top of a minaret might prove an irresistible temptation for a pot-shot. However, we redescended unharmed, much to the guide's relief.

Just outside the town there is another interesting building, the Palace, or rather Kiosk, of the Sardars (governors). In Persian times the Shah's representatives at Erivan were very great and powerful officials, and usually spent their summers in this little building, which is in a cool situation. Here was once an important suburb of the town, with a fortress, a mosque, and several other buildings. The mosque is still partly standing, and is adorned with handsome frescoes and tiles, now unfortunately falling to pieces. The whole group of buildings are being allowed to go to rack and ruin for want of a little care.

When I had inspected the ruins, and—tell it not in Gath—picked up a few fragments of tiles, my cabby drove me across several walls, over the remains of a tower, down into a moat, to the Palace of the Sardars. This building is in somewhat better repair, but it too is neglected. It is quite small, a little gem of Persian architecture; it consists of one large central hall occupying the whole width of the building with three or four small rooms on each side, beautifully proportioned and decorated with charming designs, for the most part faint and faded but bursting out into bright colours in places, like half-forgotten dreams. The vaulted ceiling is covered with a number of tiny little panes of looking-glass, the favourite form of decoration in a wealthy Persian house; there are also some portraits of famous men. Wood-carving, painted and gilt, covers the walls and doors, still almost intact. The windows have wooden trellis shutters to keep out the burning sunlight. Erivan is built on raised ground round which the river Zanga has cut a tortuous channel with precipitous sides. The Sardarsky Dvorietz, as the Russians call the Kiosk, is on the very edge of the cliff, and overlooks the river and the road far below. Here the old Persian governors lived in luxurious ease, gazing across the river to the vineyards and orchards extending for many miles, then to the plain, and beyond that again to the great and glorious mountain. It reminded me of the palace of the khans at Bakhtchi Sarai, and although much smaller, less magnificent, and in a far worse state of preservation than the stately residence of the

Crimean princes, it has the same old-world Eastern charm.

There are few other sights to see in Erivan. The streets are mostly narrow, tortuous lanes, between mud walls above which trees appear. There is vegetation everywhere, and cool runnels in almost every street. The flat roofs, on which the inhabitants spend the evenings and sleep during the fierce heat of summer, are characteristic. But there are also some handsome houses belonging to rich Armenians, well-built and luxurious, and surrounded by pleasant gardens.

But there are many interesting people in the town, among whom I may mention Karapet Vardapet * Ter-Mkrtchian, the Eparkhialny Nachalnik or acting Bishop of Erivan. Beyond the bazar on raised ground is a group of buildings surrounded by a wall forming what one may term the close. There is the Armenian Cathedral—an edifice of no great architectural importance—the episcopal offices, and residences for the bishop and a few priests. The bishop's house is an unpretentious building one storey high, with a veranda giving on a sort of garden within the enclosure, and another broad terrace looking straight across the plains to Mount Ararat. The bishop himself, Father Karapet, is a largely built man, tall, stout, evidently of great strength, not much over forty years of age, handsome and intelligent-looking. He wears a long black robe and a tall black cap, somewhat like that of Greek bishops, on which

* The Vardapets are monks and doctors of theology. See next Chapter.

he places a large flowing hood when he goes out. In his hand he carries a large silver-topped walking cane. Everything about him is large, stately, and dignified. He is a good specimen of the Armenian higher clergy, and is very cultivated. He was educated first in the seminary at Etchmiadzin, and later at the Berlin University where he was a pupil of Professor Harnack. He talks excellent German, as well as Armenian and Russian, and is the author of several publications, some of them in German and highly appreciated in German learned circles. But he told me that for ten years he had not been able to devote any time to study, for the whole of his attention had to be spent in pastoral duties and in visitations to places where his people were in conflict with the Russian authorities over Church and school questions, or where they were at war with the Tartars.

I also called on Count Tiesenhausen, the Governor, a typical Russo-German bureaucrat, polite and friendly, but unwilling to talk politics from fear of compromising himself. He was evidently very suspicious, and trusted neither the Tartars nor the Armenians, and wished to avoid taking a definite line of his own, which was all the easier for him now that Prince Napoleon as Governor-General had full responsibility. All I could get out of him was that the Armenians accused the Tartars of being in the wrong, while the Tartars accused the Armenians —both of which facts were not unknown to me. I was even less fortunate with Prince Napoleon. Although I had the honour of occupying a room

next to that of His Imperial Highness, I did not succeed in obtaining an interview, as the Prince was afraid lest his words "should get into the papers." I had a talk with his Chief of the Staff, Colonel von der Nonne, an agreeable, intelligent officer, who willingly gave me all the information I desired, and even let me read the Prince's official report to the Viceroy on the recent occurrences. I may mention that at least on this occasion the official report was borne out by all the information I could obtain from private sources.

I then made the acquaintance of some Armenian notables, one of whom held a minor Government post. His official connection, however, did not prevent him from abusing the policy of the Russian Government nor from speaking of the Tartars with great bitterness. He was otherwise a mild little man, kindly and hospitable, and although less intellectual and cultivated than some other Armenians I have met, and not wealthy, he had managed to send his son to the University of Kieff, and his daughter to that of Zürich. "The conditions here," he said to me, "are terrible. If I could only afford it, I should like to sell everything I possess and go right away to Europe and live in peace." At his hospitable board I met several other Armenians, including a priest from Asia Minor, who after dinner sang the war-song of Antranik, the leader of Armenian revolutionary bands in Turkey. It was interesting and by no means inharmonious, but most melancholy for a war-song. I could not converse with the priest as he only knew Armenian and Turkish. I found

that the Erivan Armenians speak their own language much more than those of Tiflis or Baku, and use it in preference to Russian. Dr. Tigraniantz, another highly cultured Armenian whom I met at Erivan, was a most charming and intelligent man, about sixty years old, belonging to one of the most notable families in the country. He had studied, like so many other Russian-Armenians, at the ex-German University of Dorpat in the Baltic provinces.

I spent a pleasant afternoon the last day of my stay among the famous fruit gardens of Erivan. The town is in the midst of an oasis of vineyards and orchards beyond which lies the arid plain, and the fertility of this district is celebrated throughout Armenia. The particular property which I visited belongs to a rich Armenian named Afrikian. Having inherited a large wine-growing estate, he had studied scientific horticulture at Klosterneuburg, near Vienna, and in South Tirol. On returning home he had introduced all the latest improvements into his property, which was now exceedingly valuable. These orchards are delightful retreats during the hot weather. The soil is stony and arid, but an elaborate system of irrigation has been established, so that the whole belt of vineyards is intersected with tiny runnels. M. Afrikian has built himself a large and comfortable country house, on the terrace of which we spent a pleasant quiet hour eating unlimited quantities of grapes and peaches, and drinking excellent wine, the best I have tasted in the Caucasus. These Erivan grapes, called *kiskmish*, are a delicious memory; small, seedless, with an exquisitely sweet flavour,

one could go on eating them for ever. You do not eat them one at a time as you do other grapes, but put half a dozen into your mouth at once; it may be greedy, but it is very nice all the same. And the peaches! Who can do justice to their scent, their taste, their colour, their luscious softness? We were also taken to see the wine-cellars, cool vaults stocked with huge vats, the winepresses fitted up with modern machinery, the chemical testing appliances, and all the other details of a well fitted up wine factory. My host was pleased to have an opportunity of airing his German, in which he discoursed regretfully of his happy days in the peaceful Austrian valleys, in a land where order is established and life and property secure.

It was difficult to imagine here, under these cool, green bowers, amidst these heavy laden vineyards and peach-trees, where stalwart Armenian peasants were employed among the peaceful labours of the field, that we were in a land of fire and sword, that at any moment the silence might be broken by shots, and that a column of smoke might rise from burning farmsteads. But all remained silent and undisturbed, save for the songs of the peasant at work.

CHAPTER XII

THE HEART OF ARMENIA

WHILE the Armenian people have not constituted a definite political State for nearly a thousand years, they have yet remained a nation with distinct racial and social characteristics, and this fact is chiefly, almost exclusively, due to the Gregorian Armenian Church.* That Church has been the focus of the Armenian national spirit, the inspiring force which has kept the people together through centuries of war and bloodshed, revolution and political separation, and many foreign invasions, and still maintains them a nation, although scattered throughout three unfriendly Empires. In some ways it is to-day the most living of all the Churches of the world, for it is all in all to the people who belong to it. It is the refuge and the hope of this sorely-tried nation, and has held aloft the banner of Armenian nationalism throughout the terrible persecutions which the people have suffered and are still suffering. It is in every sense a national Church ; none but Armenians belong to it, and even the Armenians who profess

* I must acknowledge my indebtedness for the architectural details on Etchmiadzin to Mr. Lynch's *Armenia* (vol. i.), as well as for some of the facts of Armenian Church history.

ETCHMIADZIN. OUTSIDE THE WALLS.

ETCHMIADZIN. THE RESERVOIR.

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other religions have a sentimental and patriotic affection for it.

The headquarters of the Gregorian Church are at the great monastery of Etchmiadzin, near Erivan, the Rome of the Armenian Church, where the Katholikos or Primate of the Armenians resides. During the recent troubles, as in every other critical phase of their history, the Armenians have looked to Etchmiadzin for guidance, to the Church which for close on sixteen hundred years has been their beacon and their hope. A visit to Etchmiadzin enables us to understand the tenacity of this people and their devotion to their faith better than a whole library of books.

The drive from Erivan to Etchmiadzin is one of the most beautiful in the world, and I quite endorse Mr. H. F. B. Lynch's enthusiastic statement that "like the journey to Italy, it ought to be included in the programme of a liberal education." I started at nine o'clock on a brilliant October morning, together with Father Karapet Ter-Mkrtchian, who was going to visit the Katholikos on business matters. The road, after leaving the last mud walls of Erivan behind, descends sharply into the gorge of the Zanga, which it crosses, and then ascends a bank on the same level as Erivan itself. The gleaming white tents of the encampment of the Baku Regiment occupy a shelf close to the river. For a mile or two beyond this point the road is flanked by vineyards and orchards, watered by countless streams, and then emerges into the broad desert plain under the glorious autumn sun. To the right and to the left the vast sandy expanse

spreads out absolutely flat, shimmering with golden light, ablaze with colour. To the north the great boulders of Alagöz, to the south the mysterious twin peaks of Ararat. Once beyond the vineyards we pass no more human habitations, but we meet numbers of people along the road, mostly peasants, Armenian or Tartar. A few of the latter, mounted on their high-mettled horses, eyed us suspiciously, and Father Karapet cheerfully informed me that they were quite capable of "letting fly" at us, although the presence of a European was a restraining influence. He himself does not fail to take precautions in the shape of a loaded revolver; the Church of Armenia is bound in self-defence to be a Church militant. We had driven for nearly two hours when we came to a spot where a side track led to a group of ruins to our left. They are the remains of the church and monastery of Zuarthotz, which have been recently unearthed. We stopped for half an hour to inspect them, and they are quite worth a visit. The church is said to have been founded by the Katholikos Nerses III. in the V. century, and to have been destroyed by an earthquake in the X. century. It aroused great admiration at the time it was built, but in the course of ages it had fallen into ruin and was completely buried in the sand; the work of excavation was commenced in 1893, but it was not undertaken seriously until 1900, when the Archimandrite Khatchik proceeded to unearth the remains bit by bit. The foundations now stand out clear, and give one a good idea of what the building must have been like. It is a fine example of the round style described in connec-

tion with some specimens at Ani,* a form particularly common among the ancient Armenian ecclesiastical buildings, and consists of an outer circle of walls supported by piers of masonry, and an inner circle with four large piers connected by rows of columns, surrounding a square enclosure within which stands a stone altar. Of the columns only the bases remain, and some of the capitals which are lying about on the ground, the former adorned with an interlacing pattern. The other ornaments and mouldings are all of a solid simplicity characteristic of Armenian architecture. There are flowery designs, eagles, anagrams, and many fragments of writing in various Oriental scripts, and one or two in Greek. Bits of tessellated mosaic pavement have also been discovered. An old monk lives alone in a little hut adjoining the ruins, and carries on the work of excavation, for there is still much to be done. The foundations of other buildings near the church—refectories, monks' cells, &c.—are being brought to light, and every year new discoveries are made.

On leaving Zuarthotz we resumed our drive towards Etchmiadzin, and were soon transported from the contemplation of forgotten mediæval ruins to the realities of modern Russia, by the sight of a long procession of peasants, some of them in chains, escorted by Russian soldiers: they were political prisoners who had been arrested for complicity in the recent troubles. One of the escort proceeded to abuse our driver, and to threaten him with his bayonet for not clearing off the road to make room for the

* See Chapter xv.

column of prisoners, as is the rule in Russia; had there not been a high ecclesiastic in his carriage he might have been arrested himself. However, we were allowed to pass unmolested, and soon came in sight of a green oasis of trees, above which the conical domes of Etchmiadzin cathedral arose. We passed through Vagarshapat, now a dusty, straggling village, and the seat of the Russian district authorities, but the capital of Armenia at the time of King Tiridates, and finally came upon a broad space, at one end of which is a long, high wall of grey mud. It is very Persian, absolutely plain and devoid of all ornament. The line is broken by bulging rounded projections at intervals, but there are no towers. A massive portal is opened, and we enter the celebrated monastery of Etchmiadzin. It is a vast quadrangular enclosure containing many buildings, of which the most important form an inner rectangle surrounding the great court. In the middle of this stands the cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

I was ushered into a stone building reserved for strangers, and deposited my belongings in a large and not uncomfortable room carpeted with some beautiful Eastern rugs. It opens on to the roof of a lower building, whence one enjoys another wonderful view of Ararat. Here I found G. B., who had preceded me. The monk deputed to look after us has been in the United States inspecting Armenian churches in that country, and spoke English. The Oriental educated in America and speaking American is quite a distinct type with which I was already familiar from my experiences in Bulgaria; he is a curious mixture

Ekhmiadzin. Cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator.

of elemental Orientalism and transatlantic push, but is usually honest and very friendly. This particular specimen, whose name I regret I have forgotten, was a charming man, and most willing to oblige in every way. Our meals, which were served in a small ground-floor room, were shared with him and another Russian-speaking monk, besides an Armeno-American married couple who had come over on a pilgrimage. We were fed right royally and generally treated with great hospitality during our short stay. There is no fixed charge, but each visitor on leaving presents a donation, according to his means, to the monastery.

We were then conducted to the great court. It is said to be the largest quadrangle in the world, being 349 feet 6 inches in length, and 335 feet 2 inches in width.* The buildings surrounding it are of stone or plaster, two stories high, and of very simple architecture. The greater part of them are occupied by the cells of the monks, each monk having a set of two or three small rooms with his own private stairway into the court, not at all unlike an Oxford college. On the south side there is the refectory and library, on the west the residence of the Katholikos. In the middle rises the cathedral of St. Gregory the Illuminator—a church which may be called the St. Peter's of the Armenian world. It marks the spot where, according to the tradition, St. Gregory the Illuminator received a vision of Jesus Christ; the name Etchmiadzin signifies "the Only Begotten is descended." A church was built to commemorate the descent in

* Lynch's *Armenia*, vol. i. p. 243.

the IV. century A.D.; but important restorations were made in 483 by the Katholikos Vahan Mamikian, and others by Komitas in 618; to the latter date may be assigned the essential features of the present edifice. The porch over the west entrance was added in the XVII. century. The building is a rectangle of grey stone, with four apses, of which one is hidden by the porch; each is surmounted by an open cupola and a belfry in red stone. The roof is very low, almost flat, but there are two depressed domes at the east end. There is a large conical dome supported on a polygonal drum at the crossing of nave and transept. The general effect suggests great solidity and strength, but the building as a whole is unusual and interesting rather than beautiful, and altogether inferior to many other Armenian churches, the subsequent restorations having considerably altered its original character.

The interior is impressive; there is a high altar surmounted by a canopy in the centre of the church under the dome, on the very spot where Christ descended, and one in each of the apses except that on the west. The windows are small, and the light is therefore dim. A large part of the walls and piers are covered with paintings of no great merit. Behind the east end of the church is an annexe containing the treasury and reliquaries. Among the objects here preserved are many relics greatly venerated by the Armenian people, such as the hand and arm of St. Gregory, a fragment of the Ark, the head and arm of St. Thaddeus the Apostle, the relics of St. Rhipsime the martyred Roman virgin, and a carved portrait of

Christ, attributed to St. John the Apostle. The examples of Armenian and other Oriental silver and goldsmith's work are very interesting and of great antiquity. There are also many recent gifts of Russian Tzars to the Katholikoi and Church of Etchmiadzin.

Another interesting building is the Academy or Seminary. The lower Armenian clergy are very ignorant, only the Archimandrites or *vardapets* being men of learning, but the more recent Katholikoi have determined that this reproach shall no longer be deserved, and the academy was founded primarily for the education of future priests, but also for boys not wishing to enter the Church. The idea was originated by Nerses V. in the middle of the XIX. century, but it was not carried out until 1873 under the pontificate of George IV. The academy is open to all Armenian boys, and is a unique institution in the Armenian world, for it includes not only a school curriculum, but a course of higher education as well. The pupils are about 200 or 300, and as a matter of fact only a small proportion of them enter the priesthood. They are educated and maintained free of charge, although those who can afford it pay their expenses. The building is clean and well kept, and the discipline seems excellent. The course includes history, geography, mathematics, Armenian literature, and foreign languages. One had the opportunity of seeing the different types of Armenian boys here collected; although the traditional swarthy type with large aquiline nose and intensely black eyes and hair is predominant, there were some as fair as English boys.

There are, in fact, two distinct types among the Armenians, besides several minor varieties.

But the most interesting feature of Etchmiadzin is the Church organization and the clergy themselves. The Gregorian Armenian Church is believed by its adherents to be the oldest established Christian Church in the world, having been founded by St. Gregory the Illuminator, who converted the Armenian king by means of a miracle. Christianity was adopted as the State religion in the III. century, thirty years before it was officially established in the West. From that time onward the two powers in the Armenian kingdom coexist, viz., that of the Kings and that of the Katholikoi, or heads of the Church, of whom the first was St. Gregory himself. Both dignities were at first hereditary, for celibacy was not enjoined on ecclesiastics until subsequently. The Armenian kingdom collapsed a century later; it was revived in the VIII. century, and crumbled to dust in the XII. century, never to rise again; but the ecclesiastical primacy survives and flourishes to this day. In the IV. century hierarchical government was introduced more or less in the form in which it still exists. The separation from the Western Church was partly due to geographical and partly to national causes. The Armenians had been represented at the first three Councils, but not at that of Chalcedon, and they rejected the compromise there effected admitting the dual nature of Christ. They held a Synod at Vagarshapat in 491, in which they solemnly cursed the Council of Chalcedon. The doctrine proclaimed at that Council that Christ by His Godhead is of one

ETCHMIADZIN. ARMENIAN BOYS; ARCHIMANDRITE IN THE CENTRE.

ETCHMIADZIN. ARMENIAN BOYS AT THE ACADEMY.

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nature with God, and by His humanity, apart from sin, is of one nature with man, was rejected. The Armenians held that Christ became man in every sense; and that in Christ there is one Person and one Nature, one will and one energy, and in their liturgy is contained the passage: "O God, holy God, mighty God, everlasting God, who wast crucified for us." They also probably accepted the view that the mortal body of Christ was incorruptible. Otherwise their dogmas closely resemble those of the Eastern Church. Their ritual and liturgy, however, differ considerably, having been developed on quite independent lines. Since the separation the Eastern Church has made many attempts to absorb that of Armenia, but without avail. The attempts made in very recent times by the most powerful branch of the Eastern Church — that of Russia — to draw the Armenians into its fold have met with no better success. The Armenians are devotedly attached to their Church, and although it differs so little from the Orthodox Church in essentials, they realize that its independence is indissolubly bound up with their own separate existence as a nation. Their devotion to Christianity is truly admirable. No other people has known such persecution, and every inducement has been offered to them to abjure their creed. In Turkey conversion to Mohammedanism would at any time have ended their sufferings and placed them at once among the ruling classes. In Russia acceptance of Orthodoxy would have earned them the approval and support of the bureaucracy. But, except for a small number of Catholic and Protestant Armenians, the

bulk of the nation has remained true to its ancient Gregorian faith. Both in Russia and in Turkey they form a separate religious community with a distinct organization. The Armenian Church as it is constituted to-day is based on two main institutions, the position of the Katholikos and the influence of the laity in matters ecclesiastical. The whole of the Armenian community is under the spiritual authority of the Katholikos at Etchmiadzin. Under him are the Katholikos of Sis (Cilicia), and that of Aghtamar (an island in Lake Van), who claims the supreme dignity, although in this he is only recognized by a small section of the population, the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, and the bishops, of whom there are fifty-two in Turkey, or counting the monastery bishops fifty-seven, six in Russia and two in Persia. There are in addition twelve bishops attached to the person of the Katholikos residing at Etchmiadzin. The synod, an ancient institution, revived and strengthened by the Russian Government as a means of placing the Church under the control of the State, consists of eight priests, who advise and assist the Katholikos. The clergy are divided into three classes—the bishops, the monks and priests, and the deacons. By another more practical distinction they are divided into black and white, as are those of the Orthodox Church. The black clergy are the monks; they are bound to celibacy, and from them alone the bishops are chosen. To be admitted as a monk it is necessary to have passed through a seminary, where the title of *Vardapet*, or doctor of theology, is conferred; but the culture of the bishops

and the *vardapets* of the great monasteries is much higher than that of the ordinary monks. They wear long, black robes, and tall, cylindrical hats. The white clergy, or parish priests, are married. While the bishops are appointed by the Katholikos, the priests are elected by the laity and merely ordained by the bishop. The most important manifestation of the influence of the laity is to be found in the election of the Katholikos himself, although since Etchmiadzin was incorporated in Russian territory the Russian Government has a considerable say in the matter. On the death of the Katholikos all the Armenian dioceses are invited to send each a lay and a clerical delegate to Etchmiadzin within a year's time. These delegates, together with the synod and the seven senior bishops resident at Etchmiadzin, meet in the church of St. Gregory and elect four candidates, who are reduced by a second ballot to two. Their names are announced to the Viceroy (or Governor-General) of the Caucasus, who transmits them to the Tzar. The latter confirms one of them Katholikos, and issues an *ukaz* to that effect. The Katholikos is then consecrated. His power, however, is limited to some extent by the synod, each of whose numbers is appointed by the Tzar out of two names presented by the Katholikos. The Tzar is represented on the synod by the procurator, a Russian official, who examines the validity of the synod's decrees, and in all matters not purely spiritual these are subjected to the approval of the Minister of the Interior. These and other questions concerning the relations of Church and State are regulated by the *Polojenie* or Regu-

lating Statute enacted by Nicholas I. in 1836. The bishops are appointed by the Katholikos, but in the case of those in Russian territory they must receive their *exequatur* from the Tzar. The interregnum of a year between the death of a Katholikos and the appointment of his successor offers plenty of opportunities to the Government to intrigue and extend its powers over the Church. The Church is maintained by the voluntary donations of the community, and by the income derived from its estates. Of these the greater part are situated in Russian territory, as the pious donors thought that they would be safer under a Christian Government than in the hands of a Mohammedan Sultan. But this very circumstance enabled the Russian bureaucracy to carry out its persecutions most effectually during the *Kulturkampf*. A sum of £10,000 a year is devoted to the maintenance of Etchmiadzin, and the salary of the Katholikos is about £1,000.

I made the acquaintance of several of the *vardapets* at Etchmiadzin, all of them men of culture and intelligence. One, Father Galust, has studied at the Sorbonne, and speaks excellent French; although a cripple, his mind is keenly active, he is a learned scholar, and is greatly interested in all the political questions of the day. Father Komitas has studied in Germany, and is an accomplished musician; he was transcribing the Armenian Church hymns and popular songs into modern notation, and has organized a boys' choir which gave concerts at Tiflis and elsewhere. Several others are authors of scholarly works either in Armenian or in foreign languages. There is an

Armenian printing press at Etchmiadzin, which has done much to propagate education among the people. The whole atmosphere of this place is that of a centre of learning and culture, like some great Benedictine abbey of the Middle Ages. It was a striking experience to find oneself in such a cultivated society here in this blood-stained and barbarous Eastern land.

But the most impressive figure of all is that of the aged and venerable Katholikos, Father Migrtich Khrimian, or Hairik as his people are wont to call him. My interview with his Holiness was unfortunately of the briefest, as he was in bad health, but it was sufficient for me to realize the wonderful fascination of this "Grand Old Man" of Armenia, to which all who have had the privilege of knowing him bear witness. He was born eighty-six years ago at Van, in Asia Minor, and in his early years he travelled much in the Middle Eastern lands; afterwards he lived at Constantinople and Sis, where he maintained himself by trading, and also brought out several volumes of poetry. His wife having died, he decided to enter the Church, and in 1834 be became a *vardapet*. He continued his literary labours and edited a review called the *Eagle of Vaspurakan*. In 1855 he was appointed Archimandrite of the monastery of Varag, where he established a printing press and set to work to arouse the national spirit of the Armenian people and to prepare them for coming events. The effect of his preaching and writing was miraculous, and the Armenians, who had long forgotten their past traditions as a nation, suddenly awoke and realized that what the other oppressed

peoples of the East were doing they might do also. In 1869 Migrtich was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople—a position of great political as well as ecclesiastical importance, for it implies the headship of the Armenian *millet*, or nationality, in Turkey. But in 1874 the Turkish Government became suspicious of his activity and influence, and forced him to resign. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, when the hopes of all the Christian peoples groaning under the Turkish yoke were awakened, he was chosen to represent Armenia at the Berlin Congress, and obtained certain promises which were inserted in the Treaty, but never carried out. He also visited England and other European countries at that time. These activities made him less a *persona grata* than ever at Constantinople, but he continued to preach and write in Asia Minor, until in 1889 he was exiled to Jerusalem. Three years later he was elected Katholikos of Etchmiadzin by the unanimous votes of the whole Armenian nation. The Turkish Government did not wish to let him leave Jerusalem to accept the position, and it was through the intervention of the Russian Government that the difficulties were overcome. Russia thus posed as the friend and protector of the Armenian Church, deriving much prestige thereby. Since his election to the supreme dignity he has been the official leader of the Armenian people, and has guided them with unerring tact and whole-hearted devotion through their terrible trials. His people venerate him and love him, as indeed he fully deserves. First came the awful massacres of 1894–96 in Turkey, when over a hundred thousand

Armenians were butchered in Asia Minor and in Constantinople, followed by more oppression. Then there was the long series of persecutions on the part of the Russian Government, less brutal perhaps but more insidious and dangerous than the actions of the Turkish Government. When the late M. von Plehve inaugurated his policy of destroying the Armenian Church, ably carried out by Prince Golytzin, the Katholikos solemnly protested in the name of his people and defended their rights to the last. In 1903, after the *ukaz* confiscating the revenues of the Church, Prince Nakashidze, the Vice-Governor of Erivan, went himself to Etchmiadzin with the police-master to superintend the seizure of the title-deeds, and submitted the aged and venerable prelate to gross indignity; when the latter was returning to the monastery from the church of Rhipsime, where he had gone in the afternoon as was his wont, the gendarmes on duty insolently forbade his entrance, and he was forced to go back to Rhipsime for the night. When asked to give up the keys of the safe where the papers and title-deeds were kept, Migrtich refused, saying, "The property is not mine to give; I hold it in trust for the whole Armenian nation. If you wish to take it I cannot prevent you, as you are the strongest, but I shall never willingly surrender it." The safe was broken open and the property confiscated, as I have told in another chapter.

The Armenian Church thus found itself without means of support. All schemes of improvement were suspended, and the bishops and monks reduced their expenses to an absolute minimum. But the people

came forward as one man. Rich and poor alike contributed their share for the upkeep of their Church, and in spite of the prohibition of the authorities, a procession of 3,000 people marched out of Erivan on foot to pay their respects to the Katholikos and assure him of their approval of his action and of their unswerving devotion. For the next two years he was ceaselessly active in opposing the persecuting policy of the Government, and in the wave of tentative liberalism which followed the death of M. von Plehve and the defeat of Russian arms in the Far East, the objectionable decree of confiscation was withdrawn and permission to reopen the schools granted. But if the laws have been changed and the heart of Pharaoh has been softened, there are still the troubles with the Tartars, which are by no means over. The energy of the Katholikos is prodigious. Until about a year ago he performed most of his pastoral duties in the neighbourhood on horseback, and he was perpetually travelling backwards and forwards between Etchmiadzin, Tiflis, and St. Petersburg on business connected with the affairs of his Church and people.

But now at last age is beginning to tell even on his iron frame, and for some time before my visit he had been in failing health. I called one morning at his residence, a very simple apartment furnished in the modern style, but without any luxury; I was told that as he was unwell he could not see me until the afternoon. At five o'clock I drove out with an interpreter to the little church of Rhipsime, a mile or so outside Etchmiadzin, for it was here that the Katholikos had repaired. The church itself is con-

temporary with the cathedral, but smaller and plainer in design. Close by is the house of the Katholikos, which is more modest than his apartment in the monastery. I was ushered into a large room on the first floor; his Holiness, attired in a simple black tunic, was lying on a sofa gazing out through the window to the wonderful view of the vast plain with Ararat in the distance. His countenance is one of the most interesting and impressive I have ever seen. Although lying there, shorn of all the outward pomp of his high rank, he had the dignity of an ancient Patriarch or of a Father of the Church. Hair and beard are grey, but by no means white, the features Oriental, almost Semitic, the eyes of great keenness and penetration, the expression full of mental vigour, and at the same time kindly and sympathetic. He received me most amiably, excusing himself for the shortness of the interview he could grant me on account of his health. I spoke to him through the interpreter, for unlike most of the Etchmiadzin clergy, he only speaks Armenian and Turkish. I asked his Holiness a few questions concerning the recent events in the Caucasus, and his eyes lit up with anger against the persecutors of his people. To my question as to whether he was satisfied with the retrocession of the confiscated Church property by the Russian Government, he replied, "Yes, we are glad, but in what a condition has that property been returned to us! In their two years' tenure the Russian officials appointed to look after it have done their best to ruin and waste our estate." The new attitude of the Government seemed to him satisfactory on the whole, "but," he

added, "if the chiefs are changed, the smaller officials are the same, and there will be much trouble yet."

We then retired leaving the Katholikos still gazing at that far mountain, the symbol of all the fascinations and mystery of this marvellous Eastern land.

Cossack Types in the Train *en déshabillé*

CHAPTER XIII

RUSSIA'S NEW ROUTE TO PERSIA

THE access to Northern Persia from Europe is now within the Russian sphere of influence. When nervous politicians and journalists express fears lest Russia should obtain control over Northern Persia and suggest means whereby her progress in that direction may be interrupted, a glance at the map will supply the only possible answer. Until Russia is reduced to a state of absolute impotence she cannot be prevented from dominating Northern Persia. Her geographical position makes that inevitable. Unless England or some other Power is prepared to go to war with Russia, Northern Persia is bound to fall within her orbit of control. Nowadays, however, Russia's position in the Middle East is so much shaken, that even if she were to advance into Persia, that would not constitute the danger for the balance of power that it would have done a few years ago. It might, therefore, seem not inexpedient to leave her a free hand in that region, and there is reason to believe that some understanding has been arrived at between England and Russia whereby the respective spheres of influence of the two Powers have been defined.

That should lead to an Anglo-Russian *entente*—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

A traveller wishing to go from Europe to Teheran has the choice of two routes. There is the usual route by rail across Russia to Baku, by steamer across the Caspian to Resht, and thence on by a road built, financed, and kept up by Russia to the Persian capital. A second route is *viâ* Tiflis, Erivan, and Nakhitchevan to Djulfa on the Araxes, across that river, and on to Tabriz by another Russian road. Section by section the Djulfa railway has advanced, first to Alexandropol where it branches off to Kars, then to Erivan, a few months ago to Nakhitchevan, and a little later to Djulfa. The Russian road from the Persian village opposite Djulfa to Tabriz has been so constructed that a railway could be laid upon it at very short notice. A bridge across the Araxes would complete the chain, and St. Petersburg would thus be in direct railway communication with Tabriz. Such a state of things is sooner or later inevitable, but when Russia finally emerges from her troubles as a civilized and liberal Power, her dominion over Eastern peoples will be less exceptionable and more beneficial from the point of view of the general welfare of humanity than it has been hitherto.

A year ago, according to all accounts, a foreigner visiting the Russo-Persian frontier would have aroused the greatest suspicion on the part of the Russian authorities, and might indeed have been summarily expelled, causing quite an international complication. Now all that is changed, and neither G. B. nor I ever received the least molestation. But the conditions of

travel on the Nakhitchevan railway are such as to discourage all who have once experienced them to venture again on that line. If the Government really wishes to keep out the foreigner, all it has to do is to run the new railway as it was being run when I travelled over it; that is a far more effective barrier than any number of prohibitions.

The new section does not start from Erivan, the old terminus of the line, but from Ulukhanlu, a station about eight miles from that town on the Tiflis line. By one of those delightful idiosyncrasies of Russian administrative methods, the morning train from Erivan to Tiflis reaches Ulukhanlu about an hour after the tri-weekly Nakhitchevan train has left, and the only means by which Erivan passengers can avail themselves of it, is by taking the evening train to Ulukhanlu, sleeping there, and going on the next morning to Nakhitchevan. The obvious remark which the reader will make is, Why not drive the eight miles to Ulukhanlu? The reply is equally obvious: there is no road, and the state of the country is such that it is quite impossible to get over the fields and ditches and rivers in any vehicle capable of carrying luggage. To sleep at Ulukhanlu does not seem a very formidable undertaking—to those who have not seen Ulukhanlu. The only place where one can pass the night is the station waiting-room, an apartment about twenty feet by fifteen into which a couple of hundred malodorous Asiatics are packed on the evenings preceding the departure of a train. Fortunately for ourselves we were spared this ordeal, as we started not from Erivan, but from Etchniadzin.

The station for Etchniadzin—a great many miles from the monastery, of course, but connected with it by a road—is on the north or Tiflis side of Ulukhanlu, so that it was possible to take the Tiflis train to the latter station, and then perhaps catch the Nakhitchevan connection—it was by no means a certainty, for nothing ever is in Russia. The good monks of Etchniadzin at first told us that we should have to get up at 3 a.m. to catch the train, but on closer investigation it appeared that 6 was sufficiently early. We bade farewell to the great sanctuary, where we had enjoyed the friendly hospitality of the Armenian Church, and drove off at 7 a.m. to Etchniadzin station. A supplementary breakfast occupied the long wait for the Tiflis train, which picked us up and brought us about an hour later to Ulukhanlu junction. Here the wildest confusion prevailed. Wooden sheds, unfinished buildings and building material, the wretched waiting-room afore-mentioned, several sidings, long rows of trucks, and a large crowd of people shouting and yelling filled the scene. We had not missed the train which was still waiting. The ticket-office was a tiny wooden hovel where several dozen Asiatics of the most unsavoury description were struggling to purchase tickets. I had a regular free fight before I could reach the booking-clerk; when I had got to him he informed me that there was no first-class, only second and third. I took second with some misgivings, knowing what the seconds on the Transcaucasian were like, but was only too glad to have got out of the press of verminous Tartars. For a long time yet we had to wait on the platform before the carriages

were opened, and when that was done there was a terrific rush for the two second-class cars, and in spite of the assistance of a porter we could not get in until all the best places were taken. I use "best" in a very relative sense, meaning merely window-seats, for I never saw such filthy cars before. They had been built at Ivry in France (oh, shades of Henry IV. and Macaulay!), but long residence in the Tzar's dominions and usage by the Tzar's subjects had made them quite Russian (Asiatic side) in every sense. They were very dirty, old, broken-down, and as uncomfortable and airless as possible. The narrow seats were covered with canvas that had once been white but was now dark yellow varied by lurid spots where nameless insects had been done to death. We were packed in as tight as herrings, a miscellaneous crowd of Tartars, Persians, Armenians, and a few Russians, all of us more or less unclean, and all very perspiring. The heat was most oppressive and the atmosphere pestilential. After some further delay the train, consisting of two second and four third-class cars, half a dozen goods-vans, and several trucks, got under weigh.

The scenery is very fine during the whole journey. The line, after traversing some vineyards and orchards, descends the Araxes valley to the south-east of Mount Ararat. This valley assumes the appearance of a continuation of the Erivan plain. It is of considerable width at first, although it becomes narrower after the first fifty miles, and ranges of mountains rise up on each side of the river. To the right is the wild chain of Zangezur, whose peaks, of many brilliant hues, assume fantastic shapes recalling

those of the Dolomites. On the opposite side beyond the Araxes are the Sokar Dagh and Khosan Dagh mountains in Persia, less bold and picturesque in form. The valley itself is of the same glorious colours as the Erivan plain, with those same wonderful grasses, golden sands of the desert, and little green oases of vineyards and poplars. The country is even more desolate than that between Alexandropol and Erivan.

The only signs of life for many miles are the rare caravans of camels. The stations are few, but they make up for their fewness by their strange names—Kamarliu, Ararat, Nurashen, Shakh-takh-ti, Bozbashi. For the most part they consist merely of a wooden shed and a log-hut. One of them is nothing more than a couple of disused railway-vans. But there is always a large crowd, composed partly of passengers, with quantities of belongings wrapped up in bits of carpet or canvas, but chiefly of loafers, who come to gaze at the strange, fiery monster. The mixture of races is very considerable, but the Tartar and Persian elements become more and more prevalent the further south we proceed. There are also numerous Armenians, a few Georgians, Turks, and Kurds, and, of course, Russians. Cossacks and other soldiers are on duty at several stations, frontier guards and mounted police, and the ubiquitous blue-clad gendarmes ; all the station-masters are Russians, and one meets a few other officials, and occasionally a commercial traveller. Tartar women also travel by train ; one lady gorgeously attired in a bright purple robe of silk, with satin shoes, and a veil so thick that she could not see at all, rode to the station on horseback,

On the Road to Persia. Wayside Station.

On the Road to Persia. Soldiers at Nurashen.

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her steed led by a retainer; she had a look at the train, and went off. At every station we see some Moslem gentlemen on prancing horses, a few queer-shaped carts, and in one place even a public conveyance. There are a few villages along the line, even more primitive than those of the Karabagh steppe. Buffets are unknown—a strange omission in Russia—but at two stations we found small hovels where tea, wine, and mineral waters were obtainable, and in one there was even some meat of a most uninviting appearance; but the staple refreshments are eggs, huge melons, and grapes. Nowhere does the train stop less than half an hour, while at some halting-places it rests for over an hour. Consequently the journey of about eighty miles takes practically a whole day. The permanent way seems very badly laid, and of the flimsiest material, the trestle bridges, which will no doubt be replaced with stone viaducts, creak and groan and quiver most alarmingly as the train creeps across them. The whole line will have to be relaid, and every bridge rebuilt before heavy traffic and express trains can make use of it.

We travel for some distance along the bank of the river, and gaze across at the Persian shore where neither house nor man nor camel are visible. The call of the East is almost irresistible, and we long to continue our journey into the Shah's dominions. But this time it is not to be; "*ce sera pour une autre fois*," let us hope. On the Russian bank there are guard-houses and frontier-posts at fairly frequent intervals, and green-clad sentries appear on the tops of ridges above the stream. But I was told that in spite

of these precautions there is a vast amount of smuggling. The Tartars have succeeded in getting hold of large quantities of arms in this way, not always, it is said, without the complicity of the Russian authorities. The Araxes is a broad, sluggish stream, thick with mud, and exhaling mosquitoes and malaria. Its waters might no doubt be utilized for irrigation, and a much larger area of land on both banks be cultivated, for the soil is very rich; but want of initiative on the part of the inhabitants, neglect on that of both Governments, and a total absence of security, has hindered all attempts of this kind. On the one bank is a Government which does little and does it badly, on the other one which does nothing at all and does it worse.

The heat during the day had been very trying and the dust stifling. But towards sunset a cooler air sets in, and the landscape is all lit up with an exquisite golden glow. Mount Ararat has become a small and almost insignificant peak in the far distance. The valley again broadens out, and we leave the river a few miles to our right. The Zangezur peaks, the Kavjik, and the Kuki-dagh, in particular, are the most striking features of the landscape, huge isolated blocks rising straight up out of the plain. There is our goal approaching, Nakhitchevan. From a distance it looks attractive and pleasant, a little white township built on rising ground nestling amidst trees and greenery, with its slender minarets pointing skywards. By the time we arrive it is almost night, and an indigo pall has descended over the land. We look forward to streets intersected with cool streams, and mosques with shady courts and plashing

fountains. But what a disappointment is in store for us! There seems to be no station, for the sheds are several hundred yards away from where the train stops. The moment we put our feet out of the car, they sink deep down into the dust. The whole of the wide open space is thick with dust, such dust as I have never seen or dreamed of in my most hideous nightmares. Every vehicle or horse that moves raises clouds of it which penetrate into the innermost recesses of one's being. As usual there are crowds of people about, wild confusion, and very few cabs; these are promptly seized by some of the more canny travellers, and we are left cabless and forlorn. Eventually a wretched *linyeika* was raised—a knife-board between two pairs of wheels. Our belongings having been fastened with bits of string, we got on to it ourselves. We literally waded through dust, and everything in our bags as well as our clothes was soon white. We were driven slowly up a steep incline on a road that was no road, between high mud walls above which the ghostly forms of tall poplars stood out against the sky. Suddenly there is loud shouting; a group of wild-looking Tartars in white skull caps and variegated costumes dash past us. We are nearly upset at the turn of the road, and cannot see four yards ahead on account of the dust and darkness. We pass through the Tartar quarter, across a bridge spanning something that may be a river or a gully, then some better-built houses, a large church, and at last the inn.

Nakhitchevan will be reserved for another chapter, but a few more words on the railway are required.

When we were in that part of the country the train service ceased at Nakhitchevan, but the line had been continued to Djulfa on the Araxes, about 25 versts (15 miles) further on, and trains are now running the whole way. Here, for the present, the railway will have its terminus, and it will probably be a long time before the bridge across the Araxes and the line to Tabriz will be commenced. Djulfa is now a little town of a few thousand inhabitants, but it had a population of 40,000 in the XVII. century, when it was one of the most important trading centres of the Middle East. According to some writers it gave its name to the Ruga Giuffa in Venice, a little street where goods from Persia are supposed to have been stored, and it is frequently mentioned by old travellers in their accounts of journeys to Persia *viâ* Tabriz. At the time of the rivalry between Persia and Turkey, the Persian Shah Abbas wished to create a desert in the country between his own territories and those of his enemies. The people of Djulfa were ordered to emigrate *en masse* into the interior of Persia, and the town of New Djulfa was founded near Ispahan for their benefit. Those who did not leave with sufficient haste were thrown into the river, and Djulfa was subsequently razed to the ground. All that survives of the old city are some towers and the remains of an ancient stone bridge.

Now it is reviving. The building of the carriage road from the Persian shore opposite to Tabriz promoted traffic on this erstwhile abandoned trade route, and the completion of the railway from Tiflis will undoubtedly promote traffic still more. For the

On the Road to Persia. Tartar Passengers Foraging.

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present, however, trade for Teheran and Eastern and Southern Persia will continue to go *viâ* Baku and Resht, as there is no carriage road from Tabriz to Teheran. But the whole commerce of the Azerbajan province (North-Western Persia) is bound to come more and more under Russian control.

The distances from Moscow to the Persian frontier (by rail) are as follows :—

Moscow-Rostoff-on-the-Don	...	...	1,165	versts.
Rostoff-Baladjary	...	...	1,221	„
Baladjary-Tiflis	...	...	502	„
Tiflis-Ulukhanlu	...	...	344	„
Ulukhanlu-Djulfa	...	(about)	145	„
Total	...	...	3,377	or 2,200 miles.

The return journey from Nakhitchevan was an even more trying experience than the outward trip. If we travelled second-class in coming, we had to go third on the way back as the seconds were full. At first we were not uncomfortable, for the bare boards were cleaner than the cushions, and the guard promised to keep us alone in our half compartment. We made friends with a pleasant young gendarme who was escorting his *fiancée* to Erivan and occupied the next compartment to ours. But first we lost our provisions, and insufficiently boiled eggs and unripe fruit remained our only sustenance. Then at a wayside station our car was invaded by Asiatic hordes, with their inevitable huge bundles tied up in filthy cloths that we suspected must contain the rampant germs of a dozen unspeakable Eastern diseases ; of course they came during the very hottest part of the

day. The problem which loomed before us now was how to get back to Erivan that night. The train was due at Ulukhanlu exactly an hour after the Tiflis train had left, and there was the same impossibility of getting to Erivan in any way as there was of getting from Erivan to Ulukhanlu. Even the Etchmiadzin refuge was cut off because we should only reach the station about midnight, and one cannot drive at night in the Caucasus. But there was one opening. The last station before the junction was Kamarliu, where we were due at 5 p.m.; an Armenian friend assured us that there we could get a carriage to convey us to Erivan in about two and a half or three hours. Unfortunately the train was an hour and a half late, and when we had descended at Kamarliu with our numerous belongings, the station-master told us that as it would be ten o'clock before we reached Erivan and the road was not considered safe after dark, no driver would convey us across country. Expostulation, bribes, and abuse being in vain, we hurried back to the train and eventually reached that cursed Ulukhanlu junction once more. The guard told us that a goods train from Tiflis was expected that night, in which we might return to Erivan.

At Ulukhanlu no one could tell us when the *tovarny poiezd* (goods train) was due. The supercilious young lady in the telegraph office (why are the young ladies of the telegraph always supercilious, whether it be in St. Martin's-le-Grand or in the Araxes valley?) said it might be in at ten, or eleven, or twelve, or even later, or it might not arrive at all. The situation seemed hopeless; a glance and a whiff at the waiting-

On the Road to Persia. The Old Methods of Conveyance and the New.

Nakhitchevan Station. Departure Platform.

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room convinced us of the physical impossibility of passing the night there. Then I went out in search of forage, for we were starving. A wild rumour reached us that there was a buffet somewhere about, and at last we discovered it. It was a small wooden shed, but it was spotlessly clean; it had long tables with cloths, and an abundance of good food and wine. "I had almost forgotten that such places existed," was G. B.'s remark on contemplating this palatial eating-house. We fed sumptuously, after which life assumed a more cheerful complexion. The wretched *tovarny poiezd* was still a mystery, but our friend the gendarme held out further hope; a military train from Alexandropol was expected, and if we asked nicely we might be allowed to travel in it. The station-master said *nielzya* (impossible), but we determined to try, and sure enough at about 10.30 in steamed the military train. I rushed down the platform and asked the colonel if he would allow us as a special favour to travel in that train to Erivan. He was most friendly and said: "There is the officers' carriage, go and fetch your things and come in." I summoned G. B. and a porter, and we were soon comfortably installed, the officers giving up the two best places to us.

The Russian officer is a strange contrast. When one reads of his cruelty and brutality, even if only half of what is written is true, he seems to be utterly devoid of any sense of humanity. Yet when one meets him and talks to him he is often a most perfect gentleman and a charming fellow in every way.

Even now our tribulations were not quite ended; for on reaching Erivan at midnight, as our train was not a passenger one, there were no cabs, and we had to wait a long time before a few appeared on the scene. Here we did a piece of politeness of which we afterwards repented. Seeing that our gendarme friend and his *fiancée* were also stranded, we asked him if the young lady would care to be driven to her house in our cab. He thanked us effusively and accepted; a few minutes later he came back and said that he had found a vehicle, but as there were several people in it, there was not room for all the luggage, so would we mind taking some of it? We agreed, expecting a couple of bags or perhaps a small box. Instead of which first came a huge basket trunk occupying the whole of the floor of the cab; next an even larger bundle wrapped up in a sheet; then a couple of bulky bags, some cardboard bonnet-boxes, a sewing-machine, and finally the gendarme's own rifle. This in addition to ourselves and own things! Our somewhat ramshackle conveyance staggered under the weight. The road being very bad we could hardly get along at all and nearly broke down several times; once, much to our delight, the sewing-machine fell off, and although we stopped to pick it up, we hoped that its constitution was irretrievably injured. It was nearly 1 a.m. when we reached the Hotel d'Orient, which, after our past experiences, seemed almost like a Ritz establishment.

NAKHITCHEVAN. THE GUARDIANS OF LAW AND ORDER (COSSACKS).

NAKHITCHEVAN. SOLDIERS IN THE BAZAR.

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CHAPTER XIV

NAKHITCHEVAN AND THE MAY MASSACRES

THIS remote little town on the Persian border, like Djulfa, has played a part in the history of the land in past centuries. To-day it is again to the fore as one of the chief centres of the Tartar-Armenian conflict and the scene of what was perhaps the most abominable massacre since the outbreaks began. I spent several days visiting the town and the neighbourhood, which gave me a clearer idea of this great racial feud than I had obtained either at Baku or at Tiflis. In the two latter places the issues are more complex; at Baku social and labour problems are mixed up with racial and religious hatred, and the situation is further complicated by the presence of large numbers of Russians, and by the activity of the Social-Democratic party; at Tiflis all the various Caucasian races are represented, but the Tartars are not numerous; only quite recently have Tartar-Armenian disturbances occurred there at all. But in the Nakhitchevan district the two races are face to face, and the question appears divested of extraneous issues. Nor are the Armenian Committees at all active, and there are no Tartar "intellectuals."

Nakhitchevan-on-the-Araxes * is a very ancient town. It was founded according to the local tradition by Noah, after he had planted the first vine on the slopes of Mount Ararat. It is mentioned by Ptolemy as Naxouana. In the Middle Ages and in more recent times it was an important place, and when all this part of the country was under the dominion of the Persian Shahs, Nakhitchevan was ruled by vassal khans of great power and influence. In 1829 Russia, after her last war with Persia, received Nakhitchevan, together with Erivan, by the treaty of Turkoman Chai. The Armenians played the same *rôle* in this conquest as they had done in that of other parts of the Caucasus, and it was largely through their action that the local princes were dispossessed. But if the khans no longer actually rule they are still very wealthy and exercise enormous influence over the rest of the Moslem community, who have looked on them as their natural leaders for centuries. Various members of the princely family, which bears the Russified cognomen of Nakhitchevansky, have entered the Russian public services, chiefly the army. To-day Djafar Kuli Khan Nakhitchevansky, an ex-officer, is Mayor of the town, while his brother Raghim Khan has also been in the State service, and is a man of great local authority.

In character Nakhitchevan is quite Persian.† The

* There is another Nakhitchevan on the Don, a suburb of Rostoff, founded by Armenian refugees from the Caucasus in 1780 (see p. 146), and a village of the same name near Kars.

† The Tartars having no civilization of their own, imitated that of Persia, just as the Turks adopted an imitation of Arab culture.

NAKHITCHEVAN. ARMENIAN SHOPS PLUNDERED BY THE TARTARS.

NAKHITCHEVAN. TARTAR TYPES IN THE BAZAR.

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mud walls, the architecture, the life, the general appearance of the streets, make of it almost a prolongation of the neighbouring Empire. Little of the ancient city survives, save the ruins of a palace, and the curious old "tower of the khans," a twelve-sided building. On its walls is an inscription in large blue letters, which if set out would develop a length of 450 metres.* It is built on an eminence in the middle of the valley of the Araxes, which here broadens out into a very large plain surrounded by bold, high mountains. There are many trees, two public gardens of the usual Russian type, and a swift torrent which divides the town into two parts. Nearly all the houses are of a flimsy construction; even the mosques are of wood and mud. But the place is very picturesque, and would not be unpleasant but for the dust, which, as I said before, is appalling. I never realized so thoroughly before the meaning of Gilbert's immortal verses about the place "where the dust of an earthy to-day is the earth of a dusty to-morrow."

Nakhitchevan is the capital of a district in the government of Erivan. The population of the town amounts to about 8,000, of whom three-quarters are Tartars and one-quarter Armenians. In the rest of the district there is rather less disproportion between the two races, which amount to 65,000 and 33,000 respectively. As at Erivan, the Tartars are wealthier than the Armenians, and own nearly all the land, whereas the bulk of the Armenians are peasants on Tartar properties or on those of the State. A small proportion have land of their own,

* Élysée Réclus, *Geographie Universelle*.

divided into small plots, and a few thousands are scattered about in the town and the larger villages engaged in commercial pursuits. At Nakhitchevan itself nearly all the house property is in Tartar hands, and even the Armenian shops in the bazaar are built on land belonging to Tartars. The two brothers Nakhitchevansky are the largest landowners in the district.

This part of the Caucasus is exceedingly wild and unruly. Russian authority is weakly upheld by a tiny force of soldiers distributed between Nakhitchevan itself and the chief villages, which was even smaller before the recent disorders. Public safety has never been assured, and murders were almost daily occurrences in the rural districts. The Tartar khans and begs are oppressive landlords, especially towards their Armenian peasants, and some of them are little better than brigand chiefs, keeping armed bands of retainers who regularly "forage" for them. It is said that certain begs live almost entirely by plunder, and many villagers certainly do. If the outrages and oppression to which the Armenians had been subjected in Persian times were no longer so violent and redress was sometimes obtainable before the Russian courts, yet life was anything but pleasant for them. It was only in trade that they had the advantage over the Tartars, although in the primitive conditions obtaining in this part of the world commerce could not play an important *rôle*, and the more energetic and enterprising Armenians usually emigrated to Tiflis, Baku, Elizavetpol, or to European Russia, where there was more scope for their activities. There are certain

villages whose inhabitants have all emigrated at one time or another and returned home wealthy. Even the Tartars themselves, who did not happen to be either large landowners or brigands, suffered from the prevailing anarchy.

After the Baku outbreak in February the agitation among the Tartars spread to Nakhitchevan, and grew more and more acute ; like their Baku co-religionists, the local Moslems thought that the policy of the Russian Government was a plain encouragement for them to fall on the Armenians. They were all more or less armed, but their weapons were not always of the latest patterns. They set about to make good the deficiency, and through the early spring consignment after consignment of arms were smuggled in, chiefly from Persia. It is said that they were in communication with the Azerbajan Tartars and Kurds over the border, and that even in the matter of religion they were more influenced by Persia *mujtaids* than by the then local mullahs whom they regarded as mere Russian officials. The Armenians had far fewer arms, most of the peasants possessing *kinjals* only, for they never expected a general attack.*

During the month of April the situation became critical, and the Armenians applied to the Russian authorities for protection. The District Governor, M.

* For the account of the Nakhitchevan troubles I am indebted to information supplied by the Archimandrites Mesrop and Karapet Ter-Mkrtchian, who were eye-witnesses, and contained in their reports to the Viceroy, and by that given by other Armenian and Tartar notables, as well as to corroborative evidence obtained from two of the foreign contractors working on the Nakhitchevan railway and other impartial sources.

Enkel, a Finn, and his assistant, M. Gogoberidze, a Georgian, were bitterly anti-Armenian; the mayor, most of the minor officials and magistrates, and all the police were themselves Tartars so that there was little to be hoped from them. The Erivan authorities were hardly of more assistance, and the Vice-Governor, M. Taranovsky, did not disguise his Armenophobe bias. The number of murders assumed alarming proportions, and the Armenians began to fear that a general attack on them by the Tartars was possible. On the 20th of May the Armenian merchants closed their shops. Three days later the Vice-Governor of Erivan arrived together with Djafar Kuli Khan, the mayor of Nakhitchevan, and on the 24th they were followed by the Archmandrite Karapet, and M. Melik-Agamaloff, the Armenian mayor of Erivan; with the object of pacifying the population, they consulted the Armenian notables. "M. Taranovsky, the mayor of Nakhitchevan, and his brother Raghim reassured the Armenians, the former in the name of the public force, the two latter on account of their influence with the Tartars, and insisted that the Armenian merchants should open their shops."*

The next morning, May 25th, the Armenian merchants, trusting in these assurances, reopened their shops at 9 a.m. The small force of soldiers stationed in the town had gone out into the country some miles distant, for shooting practice. Suddenly, bands of armed Tartars appeared from all sides, and rushed into the bazar, where they proceeded to set fire to

* Official report by Archimandrite Mesrop to the Viceroy of the Caucasus.

NAKHITCHEVAN. CORPSES OF ARMENIANS AFTER THE MAY MASSACRE.

Photo by Grigoriantz.

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NAKHITCHEVAN. A SHIAH MULLAH.

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and plunder the Armenian shops and murder every Armenian who showed himself. A circumstance which proves that the plot had long been arranged beforehand is the fact that the assailants were divided into four parties, each of which had definite duties assigned to it; one was to attack and kill the Armenians, another was to plunder and burn the shops, a third was to remove the plunder in carts, which were kept ready for the purpose, while a fourth was to attend to the Tartar killed and wounded (if any). The actual leader of the Tartars was a certain Assad Aga Kingerlinsky, a most notorious scoundrel.* It is said that bands of Tartars from over the border crossed the Araxes and took part in the operations. A foreign resident told me that some actually came, but were driven back by the troops before they could do much mischief.† The Armenians were completely taken by surprise; few of them had firearms, and there was no time to concentrate or organize resistance against this ferocious onslaught. One Armenian merchant, the richest in the town, was in his own shop at the time, together with his clerks; the building was set on fire, and he and the other inmates were suffocated. Their bodies were afterwards sprinkled with kerosene and burnt by the infuriated Tartars; others were roasted alive. Out of 195 Armenian shops in the bazar, 180 were completely plundered, twenty safes were broken open and their contents stolen.

* He was afterwards murdered at Batum.

† A Russian officer declared that in the subsequent encounters in the district between the troops and the Tartars those from Persia were the fiercest fighters. They were distinguished by metal badges.

It is said that among the papers destroyed were various documents relating to large sums of money lent to prominent Tartars by an Armenian merchant who was himself one of the victims. Murder and arson are in the Araxes valley recognized means of getting rid of unpleasant obligations. After being plundered some of the shops were set on fire, but as the flames threatened also to envelop the Tartar shops, they were quickly extinguished. The carnage lasted three hours, during which some fifty Armenians were killed and many wounded; of the Tartars only three or four were killed. The total value of the goods plundered was 1,200,000 roubles (£125,000), of which a small proportion, valued at 16,600 roubles, has since been returned. The stolen goods were hidden away in the houses of various prominent Tartars both in Nakhitchevan and the neighbourhood. It was clear that although the original cause of the outbreak was racial hatred, the desire for plunder played no small part in bringing it about.

What happened at Nakhitchevan was repeated on similar lines in other parts of the district. Out of a total of fifty-two villages with an Armenian or mixed Armeno-Tartar population, the official reports mention forty-seven in which Armenians were killed and wounded or their houses plundered and burnt. The Tartar villagers from the whole countryside rose on May 25th in concert with those of the town and from Persia and attacked their Armenian neighbours. Here are a few items characteristic of the events of May and June:—

Tazakent, suburb of Nakhitchevan. Armenian

NAKHITCHEVAN. THE TOWER OF THE KHANS.

ARMENIAN VILLAGE PRIEST'S HOUSE, NAZARABAD.

Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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quarter attacked and completely plundered; two persons wounded, and 33,000 roubles' worth of goods stolen, of which a part were afterwards returned.

HADJIBAR. Completely plundered, including the church; twelve houses burnt, five persons killed, four wounded, property worth 50,000 roubles carried off.

OKHARY-UZUM. The church and every house plundered, two men killed, 40,000 roubles' worth of property stolen.

NAZARABAD. The church and every house plundered and some burnt, two men killed, plunder worth 107,000 roubles carried off.

DJAGRY (a mixed village). Armenian quarter totally plundered, church desecrated and sacked, four houses and eight shops burnt, fifty-one persons killed and thirteen wounded, plunder worth 393,000 roubles stolen.

KHAL-KHAL. The church and all the houses sacked, two men wounded, 67,000 roubles' worth of plunder removed.

ALAGÖZ-MAZRA. Completely plundered, six houses burnt, two persons killed, four wounded, plunder worth 82,000 roubles.

KARABABA. Church and village sacked, two killed, plunder worth 44,000 roubles.

ARINDJ. Completely sacked, two killed, plunder worth 103,000 roubles.

GHINDJAZOR. Completely sacked, two killed, plunder worth 73,000 roubles.

NORS-MAZRA. Completely sacked, fifty killed, plunder worth 19,000 roubles.

GYALDJARADJUR. Completely sacked, three killed, plunder worth 47,000 roubles.

TUMBUL. Thirty-nine houses plundered and partly burnt, twenty persons killed, nine wounded.

ABRAKUNIS. Sixty houses sacked, of which six were burnt; plunder worth 20,000 roubles.

Out of forty-seven villages attacked, nineteen were destroyed and abandoned by their inhabitants, ten partly destroyed but not abandoned, and from eighteen the cattle were carried off. The total of killed in the town and village amount to 239, and that of the wounded to fifty-nine (without counting the slightly wounded), and the total plunder is estimated at 2,609,054 roubles (about £280,000).

The reason why the Tartars succeeded so admirably in the villages is that the Armenian peasants were nearly all unarmed. In the case of the few villages where the inhabitants had arms the Tartars were repulsed with loss; one or two others, such as Sheikh-Mahmud, where arms were known to be, gave shelter to refugees from elsewhere, and were not disturbed. One Tartar village, Itkran, was afterwards attacked by armed Armenians out of revenge, and thirty-six persons killed. Isolated murders, outrages, and robbery continued since that fatal 25th of May, and the villagers have had in many cases to abandon their harvests, as they dared not reap them from fear of being attacked.

As to the responsibility for these atrocities, it rests in the first place with the Tartars, and secondly with Russian authorities who neglected to take measures for the protection of the Armenians. It cannot be

denied that the blood-guiltiness is largely on the heads of the khans and begs, the natural leaders of the Moslem community. It was universally admitted by all impartial people that if the brothers Nakhitchevansky had raised a finger the outbreak would have ceased instantly, for they exercise an almost absolute influence over their co-religionists. I myself realized this on talking to Tartars of the lower class, who spoke of the Nakhitchevanskys almost with veneration. But they never moved.

The events of Nakhitchevan created a profound impression throughout the country, which eventually reached St. Petersburg. The Armenians realized more than ever the necessity for arming, and the Russian Government began to feel that something must be done to restore order in this anarchical district. The usual remedy was resorted to—the province was placed under martial law and a Governor-General appointed. Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff had only recently arrived in the Caucasus, and had not had time to take stock of the situation. The appointment fell on General Alikhanoff Avarsky, of Pendjeh fame. Alikhanoff is a Tartar himself, and a brother-in-law of Raghim Khan Nakhitchevansky, in whose house he actually took up his residence while in the town, so that the Armenians hardly dared to approach him! A more characteristic example of the fatuous policy of the bureaucracy could hardly be conceived. Instead of redressing wrongs and punishing the guilty, his mere presence was a direct encouragement to the Tartars in their truculent attitude. Even to Alikhanoff himself, a man

of ability and culture and a devoted public servant, the position cannot have been a pleasant one. Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff saw that the situation remained very serious, and on leaving Tiflis for Kislovodsk in the early summer he sent Prince Napoleon to Erivan as Governor-General. One of the Prince's first acts was to recall Alikhanoff and to visit Nakhitchevan himself. His arrival inspired far more confidence, as his impartiality was obvious to all. Bodies of troops visited various parts of the district, and had numerous encounters with Tartar bands. But even Napoleon did not wholly pacify the country, and either because he had not sufficient powers or for some other reason,* he failed to punish the guilty Tartars. He assured the Armenians that the murderers should be punished, and he ordered the Tartars to give up their plunder. But at the time of my visit, although four months had elapsed since the outbreak, no one was in prison for the events of May, except the village *starosta* of Djagry, who had actually been seen leading a band of Tartars to plunder the Armenian houses. Of the plunder only the merest trifle was restored, the murders continued, and the only improvement was due to the fact that the troops had been increased, and that their presence prevented a recurrence of the outbreaks.

As a specimen of the language used by the mullahs, the following passage, reported in the *Razsviet* of St.

* At the Tiflis police department I was told that the Prince had full powers, but would not use them ; while Colonel von der Nonne, the Prince's Chief of the Staff, absolutely denied this.

Armenian Village Guard at Alagöz-Mazra.

Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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Petersburg (June 19/July 2, 1905) is characteristic, if genuine:

"The Tartar mullahs Musan, his sons, Mamad Taghi and Alshafor, and Mashadi-Mamad-Hadji-Kerim, said: 'In any case we shall not leave a single Armenian alive, we shall kill them all, the more so as the Government does not punish us for it, soldiers and all that—it only exists for show, if by the grace of Allah we quickly make an end of the Armenians—then we shall raise all Iran and drive even the Russians out, uniting the Caucasus to the domination of our powerful Lord the Shah. Soon, glory be to Allah, at Tiflis the red standard of Pan-Islamism will be raised before the Governor's palace. This land belonged to Iran before and must belong to it again.'" *

Our first impression of Nakhitchevan, as the reader will have gathered, was not an agreeable one, and I cannot say that better acquaintance corrected it. The inn was a most curious place. It was extremely small, very dirty, and quite elemental. Our tiny rooms were fearfully hot and stuffy, and looked into an untidy courtyard; we were kept awake until a late hour by the excited conversations going on in the dining-room (this alone is a sign of Russian domination, for nowhere in the Tzar's dominions do people go to bed early). And yet in the midst of all this barbarism our dirty beds were supplied with the latest thing in spring-mattresses, and at breakfast rancid butter was served up in an English butter-cooler!

* It is quoted in a little pamphlet (in Russian) by G. Chalkushian on *The Armenian Question and the Armenian Pogromy in Russia.*

The first person on whom I called was the Archimandrite Mesrop, in charge of the spiritual needs of the Armenian community, and its natural leader. He occupied a small house near the Armenian church, a large stone building. A number of booths had been erected in the church enclosure to serve as a new bazar for the Armenians, who were afraid to return to the old one, which was in the midst of the Tartar quarter. Father Mesrop could speak good German, for he had been educated at Dorpat, and was altogether a cultivated man. I was much struck with his impartiality, for after having given me his views on the situation, he concluded, "But you must not hear our side only. As you are a foreigner seeking for information, I strongly advise you to call on the Tartar khans as well and learn what they have to say."

I subsequently explored the bazar, and the Armenians, professing themselves very solicitous for my safety, gave me a couple of youths as a body-guard; not that it was necessary, for I afterwards wandered about the town alone and was never molested. I was shown the many Armenian shops "plundered to cleanliness," as the Russians say, a few burnt houses, and other signs of the devastations. A few Cossacks and infantry were about, and a number of Tartar policemen. Otherwise life seemed to be proceeding much as usual. In the boulevard I saw an aged mullah, and my companions, who interpreted for me, asked him in Tartar if he minded being photographed. He willingly assented, for the Shiahs have not the same objection to the process as

Group of Armenian Villagers at Nazarabad. Priest in the foreground.

Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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the Sunnis. When wandering about alone I wished to walk out to a spot whence I thought I could obtain a good view of the neighbourhood; as I was going past some farm-buildings a tall, good-looking Tartar peasant called out to me in Russian, asking where I was going. On my replying that I wished to reach the hill opposite, he said—

"You must not go this way, for there are biting dogs. But wait; I will go with you."

He thereupon came out of his way to escort me past the haunts of the dangerous canines, and then bade me farewell with a dignified salutation worthy of a Spanish cavalier. If I have some hard things to say of the Tartars, I cannot deny that their manners are most attractive; the courtesy even of the peasants is princely, and quite explains their popularity with foreigners.

I did not neglect Father Mesrop's advice, but went to call on the brothers Nakhitchevansky. I first visited Raghim Khan, and what I have said of the Tartar peasant applies still more strongly to this man. He is a true *grand seigneur*, a typical Mohammedan feudal lord, owner of wide lands and master of many peasants, both Armenian and Tartar. His house is by far and away the finest in Nakhitchevan, and would, indeed, not be out of place even in a more civilized city. It is situated on the outskirts of the town, at the edge of a cliff overlooking the broad plain of the Araxes. The garden in front of it is not very flourishing, for the climate is probably unsuited to the cultivation of flowers. But internally the house is quite splendid. The drawing-room is

filled with expensive European furniture, not always in the best style, but very gorgeous ; the floors and walls are covered with Persian, Turkish, and Caucasian carpets of the richest description ; the ceiling is a mosaic of little pieces of looking-glass, like that of the Sardars' kiosk at Erivan. The decorations, the upholstering, the ornaments, have all been brought from a great distance before the days of the railway, and fitted up regardless of cost, with a view to impressing people with the importance, wealth, and dignity of the Nakhitchevansky family. Raghim Khan himself is a dark man of middle height, not as handsome as many Tartars I have met, but with a fine gentlemanly bearing and a pleasing manner. He was attired in the uniform of a Russian official, although he has now retired from the public service. He is better educated than most Tartars, and has travelled a good deal in Russia and in foreign countries ; he knows Russian perfectly, but speaks no Western tongue. Although I bore no introduction he received me with the utmost courtesy and an outspoken frankness which surprised me. He is every inch a khan, and bears the outward impress of being the descendant of a long line of rulers over a storm-swept land. I put to him a few "leading questions" as to the Tartar-Armenian strife, to which he at once replied by launching forth into an eloquent discourse.

"Do you want to know the real state of affairs?" he asked me. "Very well, I shall tell you all about it. I shall only tell you the absolute truth. When the Russian Government confiscated the lands of the Armenian Church and closed its schools, the Arme-

nian revolutionary committees became very active, and tried to enlist our support on behalf of their movement. But we Tartars are peaceful people, loyal to our Tzar, and refused to listen to them. Whereupon the Armenians proceeded to threaten us, saying that if we did not help them we should be killed. They distributed menacing proclamations and pictures of *Djon-fidais* (Armenian revolutionists who have sworn to die for their country), armed to the teeth, and told the Tartars that they had large stores of bombs and rifles. As the Tartars still persisted in their refusal the Armenians fell on them, and assassinated a great number. The Armenians have long been arming; in every Armenian house there are two or three *Berdanki*,* and in the whole district of Nakhitchevan there are from three to four thousand Mausers in Armenian hands. Every village of five hundred inhabitants has at least a hundred rifles. They obtained them from Armenian ex-soldiers, or even from the Cossacks and from the Arsenal, for Government officials are always open to bribes. The Tartars, on the other hand, had hardly any weapons at all except *kinjals* and a few revolvers. But the Armenians are cowards. They never attack an armed Tartar unless they are in overwhelming numbers, and even then they prefer to hide behind a bush or a rock. As for the May outbreak, it is all humbug; it began with an attack by the Armenians on the Tartars in the bazar, the Armenians being armed with rifles, the Tartars defending themselves with *kinjals*. Then our people managed to get a few

* Berdan rifles formerly used in the Russian army.

rifles and revolvers, and a rumour was spread abroad that my brother, Djafar Kuli Khan, and I had been murdered; this aroused the Tartars to a frenzy, and seizing every weapon they could find, they fell on the Armenians and killed several. You may think me prejudiced," he added, "but go and ask F——, the Austrian railway contractor who has lived here so many years, he will confirm every word I said."

On my alluding to the Armenian who had been burnt in his shop, Raghim said that what had happened was as follows: when the riots broke out the merchant shut down the shutters of his shop, and as it was dark he lit a match, which he inadvertently dropped on a pile of papers; these caught fire, and the premises were soon in a blaze; the inmates were asphyxiated.

I next hinted at the burning and plundering of Armenian villages and the desecration of their churches. "Do you know how that happened?" asked Raghim. "*The Armenians themselves burnt their own houses and desecrated their own churches*, so as to throw the blame on us! The Tartars never burnt villages nor killed women and children, as the Armenians did in the Tartar village of Itkran."

The khan admitted that after the May riots the Tartars had begun to arm—purely in self-defence, of course—and had obtained rifles from Persia, paying as much as 100 roubles for weapons worth only 20, or had taken them from the Armenians at the time of the outbreak. He went on to speak of the Armenians in general as a set of bloodthirsty and blood-sucking scoundrels, cowards, assassins, and swindlers.

NURASHEN. ARMENIAN CHURCH SACKED AND DESECRATED BY THE TARTARS.

Photo by a Nakhitchevan Photographer.

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DJAGRY. GENERAL VIEW.

Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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Their wealth, according to him, is enormous, and has its origin in the fact that during the war of 1877 they issued 96,000,000 roubles of forged notes; now they maintain it by going into business in Moscow and other towns, and after accumulating large sums they become bankrupt, leaving their creditors and non-Armenian partners ruined. To my question as to the Pan-Islamic movement, of which the Armenians make so much, he replied that there is such bitterness between Sunnis and Shiahs that there can be no possible basis for common action between the two sects. "There is more chance of a union between Tartars and Armenians," he said, "than between Sunnis and Shiahs." He concluded by stating that the Government was largely to blame. This is the one point on which Tartars and Armenians agree.

I left Raghim's house much edified by my conversation, for if what I heard from the worthy Tartar cannot be taken exactly as a contribution to recent Caucasian history, it was a most interesting revelation of the Tartar mind, and incidentally showed what contempt he has for the judgment and discriminating power of the Western stranger.

I also visited Raghim's brother, Djafar Kuli Khan, the mayor. He too lives in a palatial dwelling richly furnished, though less beautifully situated than that of Raghim. He has served in the Russian army, and was attired in a *tcherkesska*. He is very handsome, and has the same Oriental dignity as his brother, but he was more reticent in his speech, and although equally bitter against the Armenians he was less reckless in his statements.

The District Governor, M. Enkel, was away, and from his assistant I obtained very little information. Far more interesting was my visit to the foreign railway contractor to whom Raghim Khan had directed me in order to have confirmation of his own statements. I found him at home early one morning, a burly, good-natured, homely Austrian who talked German with a strong Tirolese accent; his wife, a German Bohemian, was everything that a good *Hausfrau* should be. It was a pleasant change to be among "white folk" once more, and it made me realize how small are the differences between Englishmen, Germans, Italians, and Frenchmen, when compared with those between West Europeans and Orientals. Herr F——, when questioned as to the events of last May, instead of confirming the Tartar version, described the occurrence almost exactly as I had heard it from Armenian sources. His report on the Tartars in general and on the khans and begs in particular was the reverse of flattering.

Before leaving Nakhitchevan G. B. and I wished to make a tour through some of the villages where there had been recent fighting. It was a very instructive experience, and gave us some idea of the conditions of rural life in the extreme south of Transcaucasia. We set out one morning in a carriage, a party of three—G. B., myself, and a young Armenian acting as interpreter. The day was very hot and very dusty as had been many days preceding it, and as were many others to follow. We had hardly quitted the town when a figure on

Drawing. House of a Rich Armenian Burnt by Tartars.

horseback emerged out of a cloud of dust behind us. He was a very tall, dark-bearded man, attired in a long black overcoat, a black alpaca tunic, black trousers, high boots, and a dilapidated straw hat, and was mounted on a sturdy little Tartar pony. He followed our carriage and exchanged greetings with our interpreter. He was, we learned, one of the celebrated Armenian *Djon-fidai* from Asia Minor, and the mere fact of his existence was illegal; having been informed that we were going to visit the burnt and plundered Armenian villages he had come to escort us as a voluntary guide and protector. His presence would ensure the confidence of the peasantry, for he was known throughout the country, while as for any possible attack on the part of the Tartars, two huge revolvers protruding from beneath his coat showed that he was well prepared for all eventualities.

Anything more parched and desolate than the country round Nakhitchevan can hardly be imagined. The burnt yellow grass, the sandy soil, the bare rocks, and the suffocating dust, under the blazing autumn sun, compose a most depressing picture; yet not without beauty. The desolation is relieved at intervals by patches of cultivation. We came upon very few people along the road, now and then a small party of Armenians or Tartars with carts and horses, and occasionally some peasants working in the fields, these usually armed with rifles. Our first halting-place was Nazarabad, a poor little hamlet of mud huts with narrow tortuous streets. We looked into several houses which had been plundered of everything; the inhabitants all fled at the time of the outbreak, but

a few had now returned. The church, too, was desecrated and plundered, and presented a most forlorn appearance.

Next came Djagry, a much bigger village, with a mixed population of 3,000 or 4,000. Several of the houses are large and well built, but some of the best ones belonging to rich Armenians had been burnt. The Armenian quarter had been looted even down to the doors and window-frames, and nearly £50,000 worth of property had been stolen. A small detachment of soldiers was quartered in the village, as further trouble was expected. The one fairly well-to-do Armenian who had something left entertained us in his house with such hospitality as he could afford; he treated us with the greatest friendliness, refusing to accept the least payment. On our tour of inspection we were accompanied by half the population, all of them anxious to see the strangers and tell them their wrongs. It was here that the village *starosta*, Abbas Zaloghi, led the plunderers and directed the massacre. He was eventually imprisoned.

From Djagry we proceeded to cross a broad valley to a group of villages on the other side. The road was as usual a mere track; there was no bridge across the river, but we drove down into a bed of immense width, over an expanse of large pebbles, through several channels with fairly deep water, then up a very steep bank, in negotiating which we were nearly upset. It is extraordinary where a reckless Caucasian driver will take you, and how you do manage to get through safe and sound. Many large and important towns have no other means of com-

munication with the outside world than roads of this description ; in the rainy season they are impassable for weeks on end. On the other side the country is more fertile and green. There is a fairly wide area of cultivated fields and vineyards, watered by a number of irrigation channels. The harvest seemed everywhere excellent. But in the villages themselves we found the same traces of devastation and outrage. At Khal-khal every house had been pillaged, and at Alagöz-Mazra the same thing had happened. The church here had been completely gutted, the money-box broken open and its contents stolen. Ever since May, however, the villagers had been arming, and everywhere small bodies of village guards were being raised, strictly illegal and unauthorized of course, but constituting the only means of protection against possible raids. At one village the whole of the "guard"—about a dozen men armed with good rifles and bristling with cartridge-belts—turned out to do us honour. We passed them solemnly in review, and then photographed them. It was the first time in our lives that either of us had inspected a military force. "Once we have eight or ten *Berdanki*," one of the men told us, "in the village, we are no longer afraid of the Tartars. Let them come and attack us now if they like ; we shall give them more than they expect." They seemed to think that when a village has a few rifles the danger of attack is minimized, for the Tartars will only go where they are sure of finding unarmed men and plenty of plunder. The experience of the May and June disorders seems to bear out this contention. If only the Armenians were able to get

arms there would be no fear of disturbances. I sincerely hope that they may do so. One of their priests told me that until recently he had always counselled his flock against the use of force, and advised them to remain peaceful. "But now, seeing that the Government will not or cannot protect us, my advice to them is, 'Arm yourselves, and if attacked shoot without hesitation.' I told this to Prince Napoleon when he came here."

The last village at which we stopped was Sheikh-Mahmud, which is wholly Armenian. It was not attacked by the Tartars, as its inhabitants were armed, and in fact the villagers from many other villages which had been plundered and burnt by the Tartars, took refuge here. We were taken to see the little church, all bright with ornaments and decorations "You see," the priest said to us, "what our churches are like when they have not been plundered; all the churches in the district were like this before the Tartar robbers came last May." The village school was duly unlocked for my inspection, a poor little building, with a few benches, a portrait of the Tzar, and some pictures of objects for school use. The villagers were most anxious to have a better school, and hoped now to get one.

In every village I found the Armenian peasantry as sympathetic and friendly as they could possibly be. They are not in the least like the traditional money-grubbing, money-lending Armenian of the towns, who to the Western mind is so obnoxious. They are simple, ignorant, and primitive no doubt, but kindly, honest, and hard-working, and are endowed with those

DJAGRY. TARTARS AT THE INN.

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qualities which make nearly all rustic folk so agreeable.

My tour in the Araxes valley called vividly to mind a similar journey through Macedonia and the Adrianople vilayet during the autumn rising of 1903. In Russian Armenia we have the same general anarchy, the same brigandage, the same succession of murders of a more or less political and religious character as in Macedonia. There has been a persecution of the Armenians by the Russian Government similar to that of the Bulgarians and other Christians by Turkey, although a far less bloody one. Just as the Turkish Government encouraged and protected the bands of Albanian, Pomak, and Turkish bashi-buzuks, and permitted the depredations of the Mohammedan begs, so the Tartar brigands were allowed to work their sweet will on the Armenian peasants of Transcaucasia. In Macedonia the Bulgarians, goaded to despair, formed themselves into revolutionary organizations, and powerful committees arose which practised terrorism, collected and distributed arms, and did not hesitate to murder obnoxious people. In the Caucasus the Armenian committees fought against Russian officials and Tartar bandits in the same way. The tale of their murders is no doubt a long one, but not so long as that of the Tartars, and in any case can one blame them under the circumstances? They are fighting an unequal fight with the only weapon left to them. In this case as in that of Macedonia, one need not be long in doubt as to where "the balance of criminality" lies. The revolutionary movement in Turkey led to a bloody

repression on the part of the Turkish Government; in the Caucasus the repression was carried out by the Tartars with the tacit encouragement of the Russian officials. The same incapacity to restore order and really pacify the country, in spite of the presence of huge armies, has been exhibited both by the Turkish and Russian Governments, with the result that chaos reigns in the Caucasus as in Macedonia and Asia Minor. We must not, however, neglect the differences. The Christians in the Caucasus are not precluded from carrying arms in the same way as are their co-religionists in Turkey; nor are the Russian law courts as farcical as those of the Ottoman Empire, and redress is sometimes obtainable, brigands and murderers are sometimes punished. A Baku lawyer had collected a vast mass of material concerning the Nakhitchevan affair which he was going to send to the authorities at St. Petersburg, and the villages had joined together to bring an action for damages against the Governor of Erivan. But the same spirit inspires both administrations.

A prejudice common among Europeans concerning the Christian races of the East is that the latter are all cowards; the Turco-Greek war is pointed to as conclusive evidence on this point, and the fact that Mohammedans succeed in massacring Armenians and Bulgarians is quoted to prove that the Christians are incapable of defending themselves. Recent events, however, have shown that when supplied with arms Christians are just as good fighters as Moslems. In Macedonia 8,000 to 10,000 Bulgarians kept several Turkish army corps at bay for many months,

Gyaz. Armenian Church Plundered and Desecrated by Tartars.

Photo by Grigoriantz.

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inflicting severe defeats on them; in the Caucasus the Armenians, once the first massacres made them realize the situation, have struck quite as doughty blows as they received, as many a Tartar has had good reason to remember; they have given examples of pluck such as the bravest fighting races might be proud of.

A further parallel may be found in the resemblances between the Armenians and the Bulgarians. The latter, in spite of massacre and persecution and the indifference or unfriendliness of the Powers, are obviously destined to be the ruling race in the Balkans; in the same way the Armenians are the most capable race in the Caucasus, and in spite of Tartar outrages and the Armenophobia of the Muscovite bureaucracy, they will unquestionably end by becoming the predominant element in the country.

CHAPTER XV

ALEXANDROPOL AND ANI

THE two towns which form the subject of this chapter are the very antithesis of each other. Both are Armenian, thoroughly Armenian; but the one was built yesterday, and is an active centre of the Armenian life of to-day, while the other is a deserted ruin, a relic of Armenia's past, sanctified by the traditions of the nation's ancient history.

Alexandropol has little to attract the stranger. The district came into the possession of Russia together with the kingdom of Georgia, of which it formed part, early in the XIX. century; but there was only a wretched village called Gümri on the site of the modern town. Being close to the frontier of Turkey, it was converted by the Russians into a fortress and renamed Alexandropol. Armenians from various parts of the country came to settle there, and a prosperous town soon grew up. The population now amounts to 32,000, nearly all of them Armenians, and a considerable trade has been developed; the railway, which here forms a junction of the lines from Tiflis, Kars, and Erivan, will no doubt increase its importance still further. The Alexandropol district is one

Village Guard at Khal-Khal.

Ani. Cave Dwellings. (*Page* 309.)

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of the few in which the Armenians are overwhelmingly predominant, and the town is typically Armenian in character and appearance. It is built on two parallel ridges on the banks of the Arpa Chai in the midst of the bare Shirak plateau, at the foot of Alagöz. The houses are all of solid stone, dark grey or red in colour, severe, usually two stories high, disposed in a regular plan, the straight streets crossing each other at right angles. There are a few public buildings of somewhat more imposing appearance—a town-hall, Government offices, schools, and several large churches, well built but uninteresting and plain. In the middle of the town is the inevitable bazar, less picturesque than those of Erivan or Tiflis, and near the post-office the no less inevitable town garden. An atmosphere of solid unromantic prosperity pervades Alexandropol, thoroughly in keeping with the Armenian character, and there is a feeling of peace and quiet in striking contrast with the chaotic turmoil of other parts of the Caucasus. The only note of colour is provided by the costumes of some of the peasantry, which are Oriental and brilliant. M. Ter-Petrosiantz, the Armenian Mayor, was the only person on whom I called; he merely confirmed what I already knew, that this district has remained quiet throughout the Tartar-Armenian troubles, and that the Armenians, although in a strong majority, have never attempted to retaliate on the local Tartars to avenge the murder of their brethren in other places.*

Alexandropol is the starting-point for Ani, the

* Somewhat later a few isolated murders have been committed, but there has been no outbreak.

Armenian Pompeii, which may be reached either by carriage or by rail to the station of Ani and thence across country. I chose the latter route, as I erroneously believed it to be shorter, and hoped to see the ruins and return in time to catch the train back to Alexandropol the same evening. The distance by rail to Ani station is about 20 versts as the crow flies, but the Russian trains, like the curate in the story, are not crows and cannot fly, so that it takes nearly an hour. I arrived at about 2 p.m., and on applying to the station gendarme, I found an Armenian peasant who was prepared to hire out his pony, and to come with me himself as a guide. An Armenian merchant, a Turkish mullah, and a couple of other peasants were going in the same direction too, so we made up a party. We set out across some very stony fields of stubble, and it did not take me long to realize that to return to Alexandropol that night was impossible. The country is a rolling upland, parched and brown, almost deserted. The heat was still very great, although we were well on in October. It took us over an hour to reach the village of Kargo, where our horses were to be left. It is an insignificant little hamlet, of rough stone-built houses, with one shop and a pleasant Armenian population. We proceeded thence on foot, and soon came to the edge of a cliff. A steep path leads far down into a gloomy, tortuous gorge, where the Arpa Chai has cut a passage for itself. The river is neither deep nor swift; its waters are of a bright green colour, touched with foam in places as they break over the rocks. The appearance of this mysterious

stream in its deep cañon-like gully is most impressive and weird. The banks are flat and grassy, but narrow, and are bounded by precipitous walls of black rock and yellow clay. A square punt was moored up to the bank to serve as a ferry-boat, in which we crossed the river. A zigzag path led up from the opposite side to the top of the cliff, where the rolling plain began once more. We walked over one or two brown ridges, and suddenly the walls of Ani came in sight. There they stood, massive piles of masonry extending for nearly a mile, with huge round towers at short intervals, mute testimony to the deeds of the Armenians in the brave days of old.

To see Ani properly you must spend at least one night there, but I cannot describe that experience as exactly blissful. I advise other travellers to bring their own provisions. The aged monk, who with a couple of peasants form the whole population of the old Armenian capital, is friendly and hospitable, and places all he has at the disposal of the visitor, but it is very little. He lives in a one-storied stone house near the cathedral, where a large but very dirty room, with four beds in it, serves as bedroom and dining-room for guests. A visitors' book is kept, going back a good many years. Most of the entries are in Armenian, and therefore to me undecipherable. A good number are in Russian, and a few in English, French, German, Italian, &c. I need hardly say that I found the record of the visit of the two English spinsters touring through the land of Ararat. Where does one not come on the traces of that most enterprising species of the human race, the

British spinster? Surely their tracks mark out the path of Empire, for they, like the men in Kipling's poem, belong to

> "The legion that never was 'listed,
> That carries no colours nor crest."

Some of the visitors have been inspired by the ruins to lapse into poetry, of the usual variety common to visitors' books all the world over. But I could not help being struck by the small number of people who visit this wonderful city. For whole months sometimes only two or three names are recorded.

Before describing the ruins themselves I must say a few words on the situation and history of Ani. The Arpa Chai has cut its way by a deep, sinuous cañon across the plain at this point, and is joined by a small stream, also in a deep ravine, called the Aladja Chai. On the promontory formed by the meeting of the two rivers Ani has been built. The third side is indicated by a slight depression of the soil across which a fosse was excavated, and two ravines with a tiny torrent in each join the rivers. A platform is thus formed which offered excellent opportunities for defence in days when there was no artillery to dominate it from the neighbouring heights. In fact, Ani was originally a fortress, before it became the capital of a kingdom. The enclosure is not flat, but like the rest of the plain, rolling and irregular, with several sharp eminences and depressions. The soil is of a rich brown colour, very stony in parts, and covered with a pale yellow grass, which serves to

Ani. Walls Viewed from Within.

Ani. The Walls Viewed from Outside.

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intensify the appearance of dry barrenness. In the middle of this desolate space stand the ruins of churches and palaces without number, some mere vestiges of broken masonry and formless heaps of stones, others in their general features almost intact. All around, as far as the eye can reach, the plateau extends in vast folds and waves like the ground-swell of a sea. Due east rises the mass of Alagöz, on which a few small snow-fields gleam brightly. To the south-east is Ararat, but it is hidden from us by a number of minor eminences.

The history of Ani * is closely bound up with that of the Armenian kingdom in its later phase. In the early days of the Arsakid dynasty we have no record of Ani. After the collapse of that house the country was conquered by the Persians and formed part of their Empire, while the western provinces were annexed to the dominions of the East Roman Cæsars. In the VII. century it was overrun by the Arab invaders and eventually annexed to the Baghdad Khalifate. The conquerors persecuted Christianity and attempted, though without success, to exterminate it—the Persians in the interests of the religion of the Magi, the Arabs in those of Islam. Under the Khalifs the country was ruled by Mohammedan governors, who in later times permitted the inhabitants a certain amount of autonomy. The Armenian people were under a feudal *régime* at the head of which we find certain great families; the most important of these are the Bagratids, who were of Jewish origin, and the

* I am largely indebted to Mr. Lynch's *Armenia* for this sketch of Armenian history and for some of the architectural details of Ani.

Artsruni. The former gradually succeeded in dominating the eastern half of Armenia, first as mere representatives of the Khalifs and the latter as more or less independent kings, while the latter ruled in the west.

For a short period the Bagratid kings succeeded in bringing the whole of Armenia under their sway ; but from the VIII. century onward the history of the country is a series of wars and revolutions, in which domination is divided between and fought for by the Arabs, the Greek Emperors, the Seljuk Turks, and various native princes. The first Bagratid king was Ashot I. (856–889), under whom the kingdom of Armenia extended to Erzerum in the west and to Caucasus and the Caspian in the east. With the advent of his successor Sembat I. (890–914) begins the series of invasions by the Arab governors of the province of Azerbajan, which were to play such a part in the subsequent history of the country. The war waged by the men of Azerbajan, Persians, Arabs, Kurds, and Tartars, against the Armenians may indeed be said to have continued with few interruptions for sixteen hundred years. Its latest phase is the present struggle in the Eastern Caucasus, for most of the Tartars there are of the Azerbajan stock. Under Sembat I. Ani, then only a fortress, was given over to the Georgians. It was subsequently regained by the Armenian kings, and already began to acquire importance on account of its churches and monasteries. Ashot III. was anointed king of Armenia at Ani in 961. He it was who converted it into a splendid city and made it the capital of

ANI. THE CATHEDRAL.

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his kingdom. His son and successor, Sembat II. (977–989), enlarged and beautified it. Gaghik I. (989–1019) completed the fine cathedral, built the church of St. Gregory the Illuminator, and transferred the Patriarchate to Ani. During the reign of Ashot IV., in 1022, Ani was captured and pillaged by the King of Georgia, the first of its many conquerors. But it soon fell again into the hands of the Armenians. This part of Armenia came to be designated the kingdom of Ani or Shirak, to distinguish it from the Armenian kingdom of Van or Vagarsapan. Ashot gave it over by his will to the Greek Emperors; the Greeks afterwards claimed the heritage, and in 1041 attempted to seize Ani, but were defeated. Here we see one of the earliest manifestations of the hatred of Armenians and Greeks, which, like that of Greeks and Slavs in the Balkans, contributed in no small degree to the conquest of all these lands by the Ottoman Turks. Now begins the most woful period of Armenian history.

In the west the Ottoman Turks make their appearance and begin their ravages, while in the east Toghrul Bey conducts his hordes of Turkomans from Azerbajan to Nakhitchevan and the Araxes valley. Gaghik II. (1042–1045) defeated the Turkomans near Erivan, but failed to stop their advance. In 1045 the Greeks succeeded in seizing Ani by treachery, which for some time was to be ruled by Greek Governors. Ten years later a host of Seljuk Turks massacred a number of Armenians outside the walls of Ani, and in 1064 Alp Arslan, the Seljuk Sultan, made a formidable attack on the city.

After a twenty-five days' siege the Turks penetrated within the walls, each man, according to Matthew of Edessa, carrying a knife in each hand and a third in his teeth. The garrison took refuge in the citadel, and the citizens were massacred by the thousand. Ani was afterwards purchased of the Seljuk Sultan by the Kurdish Mohammedan family of Beni-Cheddad, who formed a small vassal state, and dragged on an eventful and stormy existence until nearly the end of the XII. century. In 1124, David, King of Georgia, took over the city and held it for a short period; his successor, George III., captured it in 1161, restored it to the Kurds four years later, and seized it again in 1173. In the reign of the celebrated Georgian Queen Thamara (or Thamar), the people of Ani were massacred by the Emir of Ardabil in Azerbajan. In spite of these repeated sacks the city seems to have been still rich and populous; but in 1239 it was captured and plundered once again by the destroying Asiatic hordes of Genghis Khan. In 1319 the final catastrophe came in the form of an earthquake, which wrought terrible havoc. Although the city seems to have been partly inhabited for a few years more,* it never recovered, and was eventually abandoned. So it has remained for close on six centuries, deserted, solitary, and silent, a monument to the past greatness and magnificence of a people.

Ani must have been a splendid city indeed in its halcyon days. Mass was celebrated, says Matthew of Edessa, in a thousand and one churches, many of them of great wealth and magnificence, as the ruins

* *Armenia*, by H. B. F. Lynch, vol. i. p. 336.

attest to this day. Merchants from all parts of the Middle East flocked to its markets, and a teeming busy population, said to have numbered 100,000 souls in the XI. century, filled its streets. The whole enclosure of the ruins is not very large—about three and a half miles in circumference. Mr. Lynch * suggests that a great part of the inhabitants must have dwelt outside the walls. The existence of large numbers of cave dwellings in the ravine of the Aladja Chai, many of them inhabited to this day, bears out this view.

The character of the architecture is very striking, especially to those unfamiliar with the Armenian-Georgian style. Its direct descent from that of Byzantium and its resemblance to Norman, to which I have alluded in a previous chapter, are particularly remarkable, although there are many individually Armenian characteristics. The masonry is, as usual, extremely solid and of excellent quality. The walls are composed "of an inner core of conglomerate, faced on either side with rectangular blocks of hewn stone," alternately red and dark grey in some buildings, wholly grey, red, or of a brownish yellow in others. The adornments are severe and simple, but beautifully moulded and always in exquisite taste. Besides the buildings which are still standing excavations are constantly bringing to light the foundations of further edifices. The greater part are churches and monasteries, although the city walls and the castle are among the most conspicuous. Of private dwellings there are very few traces, whence Mr. Lynch argues that they were probably built of inferior material.

* Ibid. p. 370.

The first building which one sees on reaching Ani is the outer wall. Nowhere, except at Constantinople, have I seen more splendid defences of a mediæval city. For about two-thirds of a mile they are still standing, and broken fragments of them extend along the whole length of the circumference of the city and descend into the ravine of the Arpa Chai. The part which is still more or less intact is that defending the almost level space between the two rivers, where the strategic position was naturally weakest. We have a long stretch of double walls and forty huge round towers at short intervals. The chief entrance is by a small gateway in the outer wall leading into the enclosure; we then turn to the left for a short distance until we come to a second larger gate in the inner wall flanked by two massive towers. There is a bas-relief of a lion and several inscriptions in various characters on this part of the fortifications. The walls were first built by Sembat II. late in the X. century, but his successors altered and strengthened them at various epochs during the XI., XII., and XIII. centuries. From beyond the gate we see the perspective of the inner wall which has several square towers; it is in much less good repair than the outer facing. It is a most lonely, solemn scene, this wide expanse of brown earth and yellow grass with the towers and churches standing out like isolated sentries. On entering the enclosure one first turns one's steps in the direction of the cathedral. From a distance it seems to be merely a plain rectangular structure with no architectural pretensions. But on closer inspection it proves to be a building of really great beauty and

ANI. CHURCH OF ST. GREGORY.

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of the most perfect proportions. The material used is stone of a rich rose-red, which glows in the bright sunlight, producing a most wonderful effect. It stands quite alone, for only the merest vestiges of the neighbouring edifices remain. The outer walls are very simple but perfect in their simplicity; they form an oblong, unbroken by apse, buttress, porch, or other projection. The only adornments are the two large niches at the east end, smaller ones on the other sides, a false arcade of round arches lightly indicated covering all four walls, and a number of high, narrow, round-arched windows. The columns of the false arcade are slender and graceful, their capitals and the mouldings round the niches and windows are of delicate and tasteful workmanship. The general scheme of decoration is Byzantine, but it is much simpler than that of the famous temples of Constantinople or Ravenna. There are no human and very few animal figures to be seen, except some birds of a kind closely resembling those of Byzantine art. The commonest form of ornament is the interlacing pattern which by a skilful arrangement of deep shadows forms a most valuable decorative feature. The roof is all of stone, and indicates the cruciform plan, showing the nave and the transept with the base of a drum, also adorned with a false arcade, which formerly supported a dome, now fallen in. The interior is of extreme grandeur and stateliness. The simplicity both of plan and of decoration, the beautiful proportions, and the perfection of the lines are most striking. Although not a large building—according to Mr. Lynch the interior measures 105 feet 6 inches

in length by 65 feet 6 inches in breadth—it is very high and produces, like so many of the Armenian churches, an impression of great spaciousness and of religious solemnity. Four large piers of masonry support the dome, while two others are at each end of the church, pointed arches springing from them. The rounded apse, adorned with an arcade above the daïs, is contained in the space indicated by the two outside niches at the east end. Two small apses to the north and south complete the interior. There are faint traces of paintings on some of the walls, too faded and damaged to indicate the subjects. The lighting would be very dim but for the hole in the roof produced by the collapse of the dome. The floor is covered with large stone flags. Many fragments of sculptured stone are scattered about, but most of the best specimens have been transferred to the museum. A poor little altar has been erected in one of the apses, where the old priest occasionally says mass; patriotic Armenians are wont to make pilgrimages here from time to time to listen to Divine service amidst the "bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang."

The inscriptions, which are mostly in Armenian, indicate Sembat II. (977–989) as the founder of the cathedral, which was completed by Gaghik I. (989–1019). Some of the legends allude to public acts of the kings or governors of Ani, and others to pious donations to the Church.

The next most important church is that of St. Gregory the Illuminator, situated on the ridge to the east of and below the cathedral overlooking the dark

ANI. THE CASTLE.

gorge of the Arpa Chai. In general form it closely resembles the cathedral, but the conical dome supported on a polygonal drum and the elaborate porch have survived, although in a ruinous condition. The false arcade rests on slender double columns, and its mouldings and tracery are extremely rich and finely chiselled. The eagle pursuing a hare and other bird *motifs* are prominent. There are niches similar to those of the cathedral, but less pronounced, and the same arrangement of the roof indicating nave and transept. The porch is of much more solid and heavy construction and of a later date; it is formed by round, stilted arches supported on short, squat columns with beautifully carved capitals of a Byzantine type. The arches themselves have the Norman zigzag moulding, surmounted by tracery. Both within the porch and within the body of the church the frescoes, representing figures of Christ, the Virgin and Saints, are fairly well preserved, and although of small artistic value enhance the general decorative effect.

The church was built together with a monastery, according to an Armenian inscription, by one Tigran, of the family of Honentz, in 1215, while Zakarea was Governor (in the Georgian period). As several of the inscriptions are in Georgian or in Greek characters the opinion has been expressed that it was a Greek church; but, as Mr. Lynch points out, it was built by an Armenian and dedicated to an Armenian saint.

The beautiful little chapel of St. Gregory belongs to a different type, also common in Armenian architecture It is a polygonal building (twelve sides)

supporting a round drum with a conical roof. On each side there is a window or a niche, narrow and round-arched, with a string-course going all round the building and blending with the false arch above the niches. Internally, we have the usual combination of simplicity with exquisite proportions producing an impression of loftiness and dignity. It was a sort of mortuary chapel to the Pahlavid family, some of whose members were buried here; there is an inscription by one Vahram, who personified Armenian patriotism and opposed Greek influence, and died in battle against the Kurds (1047). There are traces of many tombs. A very similar building is the chapel of the Redeemer, dating from the XI. century, situated at some distance beyond the east end of the cathedral. There are several chapels of the same order at Ani, some still standing, others only indicated by the foundations. Nor can the church of the Apostles be overlooked, which although in ruins shows signs of having been a fine building. The east front is decorated with elaborate honeycomb vaultings, false niches, and other Saracen adornments. The earliest inscriptions bear the date 1031 and the name of Apughamer, son of Vahram, while the latest is a public proclamation of the year 1348, which shows that even twenty-nine years after the great earthquake the city was still inhabited.

A very important and beautiful building is the monastery of Khosha Vank, on the opposite bank of the Arpa Chai, mentioned in the chronicles as the place where the Armenian kings often repaired to deliberate on affairs of state. But unfortunately I

did not have time to visit it, as it is some distance from Ani.

Of the secular buildings the most remarkable is the castle, a huge structure at the edge of the cliff, overlooking the Aladja Chai ravine at the extreme north-western end of the town. On the inner side we see two storeys, the lower formed of three rounded barrel-shaped vaults, the upper divided into three corresponding apartments. The outer wall facing the town has collapsed and the roof has fallen in. On the other side, overlooking the valley the masonry descends further down, thus forming a higher building, and there are a number of other chambers and passages. The only piece of decoration is the doorway facing the town, adorned with beautiful carving and inlay, surmounted by a pointed arched window. I was told by the old priest that this was the palace of the Pahlavid kings, but Mr. Lynch describes this designation as "purely imaginary." It was probably part of the defences of Ani, and its outer wall is indeed a continuation of the great double wall already described.

At the southern end of the town on a high mound we have the remains of the citadel—the citadel which was probably the fortress of Ani before the city was built. All that remains of it are some fragments of walls and two small chapels, one of which contains a few beautiful fragments of carving. The palace of the kings was apparently situated here.

Another large edifice is the mosque with the polygonal minaret, built by Manuchar, of the Kurdish family of Beni-Cheddad, Prince of Ani (1072), and is no doubt the earliest Moslem temple.

There are several Persian, Arabic, and Cufic inscriptions of various dates. The exterior consists of plain, unadorned walls of black and red stones, but the interior is a curious chamber with round vaultings, supported by short, thick, round columns. There is a lower chamber with windows overlooking the ravine, but below the level of the Ani plateau. It is now used as a storehouse of antiquities, and contains a number of fragments of stone carving, capitals, inscriptions, pottery, ornaments, and coins, besides a few archæological books, plans, and drawings relating to Ani.

Wandering about the deserted city one comes every moment upon some new discovery, some fresh fragment of architecture. On the sides of the cliffs there are many remains of fortifications, massive towers, bastions, and parapets, and here and there a small chapel. Right down in the gorge, not far from the ferry, are the broken piers of a stone bridge across the Arpa Chai, whence a road led up to the city ; somewhat lower down are the remains of a second. There are numerous subterranean chambers, probably storerooms for grain and reservoirs. A great deal remains yet to be excavated at Ani, for hitherto the Russian Government, in its absurd fear of arousing Armenian nationalism, has opposed any systematic exploration. Professor Marr, of St. Petersburg, is now working at the ruins, and has made many valuable discoveries, but even he is hampered by want of funds, and in the present state of things the Government is not in a position to provide much money.

Very curious and interesting are the cave dwellings, of which there is a large number. The most important

group are those in the Aladja Chai ravine and in the little valley running up towards the depression separating the Aladja from the Arpa Chai. The Aladja ravine is much broader and less forbidding than that of the Arpa Chai, and the banks are grassy and in places cultivated, so that it would naturally be preferred as a place of residence. A whole row of caves has been dug out of the soft tufo on what I may call the Ani block, just below the castle, another on the opposite side of the little valley, and several rows beyond the Aladja Chai. A large part of the ancient population of Ani probably dwelt in them, and many are still inhabited to this day. I entered two or three, and certainly I have never seen more primitive dwelling-places anywhere. There was no overcrowding, as each family had two or three "rooms" at its disposal; but there was no furniture save couches made by cutting into the tufo, a few rags, and some cooking utensils. The dirt, the poverty, and barbarism were incredible. These Troglodytes were both Armenians and Tartars; I have seldom met with more wretched specimens of either race. On the plain beyond the double wall, at some distance from the deserted city, is a small village, also called Ani, inhabited by Tartars, but of a superior type. They were very friendly and courteous, and I was taken into a dark, cellar-like room with no furniture, save a broad earthen divan round three sides of the apartment and covered with dirty cushions and rugs. Here a number of villagers and a few strangers, including the Armenian merchant with whom I had travelled the day before, were gathered together to chat and eat grapes. Tartars

and Armenians in this part of the country seem to live on very good terms, and although separated by religion and customs, are not at all anxious to cut each other's throats.

From the Tartar village I returned to the ruins, and after a meal in the hostelry I took leave of this marvellous city. It shows evidence of a building power and architectural skill on the part of the ancient Armenians of the highest order, and enables us to realize that this people, in spite of the lamentable history of the last six centuries, is a nation with a noble past. To-day this spot, where proud kings once dwelt in splendid courts and held sway over prosperous lands and civilized subjects, where public life was active and vigorous, is a crying wilderness. None but the old priest and the peasant family dwell within the enclosure, and even the neighbouring country, formerly so fertile and well-peopled, is now almost uninhabited, and has become to a great extent barren desert. Is the state of Ani symbolical of that of the Armenian nation, and are they destined at last to disappear or be absorbed into other races, other religions? I do not think so, for with all the sufferings and persecution they have undergone they still preserve a vigorous national life. Many of them have been massacred, but the survivors are not absorbed. Their industry is more active than ever, and education is making great progress. They have built up the oil trade of Baku, they monopolize the commerce of Tiflis, and at Rostoff-on-the-Don, Baku, Odessa, Moscow, Kishinieff, Constantinople, Bombay, Calcutta, and many another city far removed from their

VILLAGE OF ANI. GROUP OF TARTAR CHILDREN

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ancestral homes, they form industrious, intelligent, and prosperous commercial communities. A people with such a past and such a present need surely not despair of its future.

CHAPTER XVI

OVER THE FROSTY CAUCASUS

WHEN I left Tiflis on my way back to Europe, after a prolonged stay in Caucasia, I had hardly seen the Caucasus itself at all. I had had a glimpse of great peaks from the deck of the steamer coming from Odessa; the beautiful Tetnould had appeared to me one day while I was at Kutais; and once or twice I had visions of the Kazbek from Tiflis. But of the real Alpine scenery I had as yet seen hardly anything, for my interest lay all with the political problems among the people of the Transcaucasian plains and valleys. So I seized the opportunity to travel home by the famous Voyenno-Gruzinskaya Doroga (the Georgian military road) rather than by the more convenient railway route *viâ* Baladjary. Rumours of a railway strike in European Russia had already reached Tiflis, but I hoped to cross the mountains in time to catch the train to Rostoff-on-the-Don, where I had some friends, before the movement got so far south.

The Darial Pass, or Pass of the Cross, as the Russians call it, has had an eventful history and played an important part in Caucasian affairs from

THE GEORGIAN ROAD. VIEW OF DUSHET.

THE GEORGIAN ROAD. VIEW OF MTZKHET.

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time immemorial. The great range which divides Europe from Asia appears to be an impassable barrier of ice and snow and rock, but in reality it has often been crossed by invading armies, while the warlike, savage peoples inhabiting the fastnesses of the mountains were always a terror to the peoples of the plains both north and south. Where the central passes proved too difficult of access, the invaders crossed by the lower hills to the east or crept round along the Caspian coast. Until the XVIII. century the invasions were mostly from south to north, but with the accession of Peter the Great to the Russian throne a contrary movement began, and Russia sent expedition after expedition to the promised land of Transcaucasia, now to attack an enemy, now to "protect" a friend, but always with the same ultimate result—that of extending and consolidating her domination. Many of these expeditions crossed by the Darial Pass, and more than once were large bodies of troops defeated and annihilated by the fierce mountaineers.

Merchants and travellers used this route too, but it was always a dangerous one. There were no roads, and the fierce torrents frequently inundated the narrow valleys and made them impassable; while avalanches and landslides swallowed up whole caravans of men and animals. At one point the merchandize had to be carried on men's backs for a considerable distance. The bands of brigands were even more dangerous, and no one ventured to undertake the journey without a strong armed escort. Then there were tolls to pay to the mountain chiefs,

and the natives who helped travellers across the bridgeless Terek demanded extortionate prices. The track was strewn with skeletons of men and horses.

When Russia came to acquire first a protectorate, and later absolute dominion over Transcaucasia, one of her first objects was to ensure the security of this passage which was the best means of communication with her newly acquired territories. First two bridges were built; then blockhouses and Cossack posts were erected to protect travellers against mauraders; finally the great road was commenced, and built under the rule of Prince Vorontzoff and Prince Baryatinsky. The difficulties were enormous, and taxed Russian engineering skill to the utmost; it was not until 1861 that it was opened to the public, and is one of the most magnificent pieces of road-building in the world. Until a few years ago the Georgian road remained the chief connecting link between European Russia and Tiflis. There was a constant passage to and fro of soldiers, officials, caravans of merchants, travellers of all sorts. The Russian railway system ended at Vladikavkaz, the northern terminus of the road, and the Transcaucasian railway had no connection with it. There was talk of tunnelling through the central Caucasus so as to unite Tiflis with Vladikavkaz by rail, and also of a Black Sea coast-line from Novorossiisk to Poti; but both projects were dropped on account of the immense natural difficulties. Then the Batum-Tiflis line was prolonged to Baku for the convenience of the oil industry; in the 'nineties the Vladikavkaz

THE GEORGIAN ROAD. GUDAUR AND THE SEVEN BROTHERS.

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railway was extended to Petrovsk, 353 versts from Baku, and finally, in the first years of the XX. century, Petrovsk was linked with Baku, thus completing the line from Moscow to Tiflis and Batum, *viâ* Rostoff and Baladjary. The opening of the railway connection has diminished the traffic along the Georgian road considerably; travellers in winter, and many even in summer, prefer the Baladjary route, which is more comfortable and does not necessitate change. But the scenery is far finer on the carriage road.

The administration of the Georgian road is very good; it is, in fact, the best institution in the Caucasus. The whole route is divided into twelve sections, of about 16 versts each. There is a postal station at the end of every section, where horses are changed and food and lodging may be obtained at fixed rates. There are two mail-coach services every day in each direction (three in summer), or one may hire a separate postal carriage. Being alone at that time I travelled by the mail-coach, which I found quite comfortable; it is a lumbering, old-fashioned vehicle with six places—two first-class inside, three seconds in the open *coupé* behind the driver, which are by far the best, and one third-class perch at the back. It is harnessed to two horses for the flat or downhill stretches, but two or three more are added, one of them ridden by a small boy as postilion, for the ascents. Besides the driver, there is the "conductor," an imposing person in a brown *tcherkesska* and a variety of picturesque adornments, including the inevitable *kinjal* and revolver; he blows a trumpet

as a warning to other vehicles to make room for His Majesty's mails, or on entering a village.

For some hours the road follows the Batum railway as far as Mtzkhet. This unpronounceable place, now a village, was formerly the capital of Georgia, and still contains several churches and monasteries and walls of great antiquity; it is situated on a grassy ridge overlooking the Kura. I was unable to see anything of it, for the road does not pass through it. Hour after hour we toiled slowly up gentle slopes amidst cornfields, meadows, and woods, with mountains on all sides, neither very high nor very imposing. In fact, during the whole of the first day the scenery, though pleasant and bright, is somewhat tame. At Dushet, half an hour's rest for lunch; it is a pretty little town, well situated in the Aragva valley. A large detachment of troops is stationed here now, for it is the centre of the communistic agitation, and the peasants have been seizing the lands of the State and of the nobles. Again we toil up hill and down dale, through a narrow gorge, and out into a broad space beyond where two valleys meet; there on a rocky eminence commanding the passage rises the picturesque stronghold of Annanur, "*le seul sourire du Caucase*," as a French writer called it. It was an important point of vantage in the Middle Ages, and was fortified by the Georgian kings. Many times it was attacked and sometimes taken; it saw the Arab invaders and witnessed the passage of Timur the Tartar. The modern village is very small, and I saw very few inhabitants save a couple of Georgian peasants on horseback and some wandering Ossets.

THE GEORGIAN ROAD. PUBLIC DILIGENCE ON THE PASS OF THE CROSS.

THE GEORGIAN ROAD. NATIVE CARTS AT THE KAZBEK POST STATION.

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Beyond Annanur the valley becomes rapidly narrower; the daylight is going, and by the time we reach Passanaur it is quite dark. We are now 3,400 feet above the sea, and it is getting cold. Of the scenery we see nothing save the forms of steep mountains looming above us and the foaming Aragva below. Another stretch of dark road, the great mountains seeming to hold us ever more firmly within their iron grip. Then Mlety (5,000 feet), supper, and bed. This station is the largest on the whole route, and boasts of a gaudy and not overclean dining-room adorned with ugly brass candlesticks and vases full of paper flowers.

The next morning we rise before dawn and are off by six. Now begins the steepest ascent of all; we are climbing up an almost perpendicular mountain-side by a wonderful zigzag road. Here and there a Georgian or Osset village clings desperately to the cliff; these hamlets look like something between bee-hives and heaps of stones. A few prehistoric carts and half a dozen peasants in sheepskins and rags are the only people we meet. But even the Caucasus is not free from the name-scribbling wretch, and the rocks are scrawled all over with patronymics and dates. The mountains are becoming ever grander, the vegetation more sparse, and the snow-peaks at last begin to appear. The first we sight is the Seven Brothers. At Gudaur, the highest station of all (7,200 feet), there is an observatory. Another hour of steep uplands and bare plateaux, and we are at the famous pass of the Krestovaya Gora (Mount of the Cross, 8,720 feet high). We are now on the

threshold of Europe and Asia. An immense yawning chasm opens out before us, and great white peaks rise up on every side. We begin to descend down appalling zigzags, sometimes through tunnels built to protect the road against avalanches, but in spite of these precautions the passage is still dangerous in springtime. The landscape is one of almost terrible wildness and desolation. On the south side the approach to the Caucasus is gentle and verdant, but on the north it is forbidding and hostile.

The first station on the descent is Kobi, in an open space where four glacier-fed torrents meet and form the Terek. A wretched village, a few poor fields of corn, some tiny trees—that is all. Now Kazbek appears in all its grandeur, a splendid giant of dazzling whiteness, 16,500 feet high. Like Ararat, it is a mountain of legends, and is venerated by the natives more than any other peak in the Caucasus. Vast glaciers creep far down into the valleys, and Kazbek itself rises up from a chaos of rocks. The village at its feet is also called Kazbek, and so are half the inhabitants. One of them, Alexander Kazbek, was a distinguished man in his way, and his memory is still remembered and loved by the mountaineers. He was devoted to the Osset people who dwell in this district, and being a rich man, he gave all his life and his income to ameliorate their wretched conditions, ever pleading their cause to the Russian Government. He led the simple life of a shepherd on the mountains. He loved his Kazbek as though it were a human being, and he wrote many poems about it which are greatly appreciated wherever the Georgian

The Georgian Road. Kobi.

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tongue is spoken. A few years ago he died at Tiflis at the age of sixty, and his last wish was to be buried in the village churchyard facing his adored mountain.

After Kazbek the road enters the Darial gorge, the Portæ Caspiæ of the ancients. This is the gloomiest and most savage part of the whole route; immense walls of iron-grey naked rock rise up on either side of the roaring Terek, nearly 6,000 feet high. The passage is so narrow that there is only room for the river; the road had to be cut out of the rock. Solitude adds to the terror of the scene, and one encounters hardly a living being. For eight miles we are en gulfed in this dark sepulchre. On emerging from the narrowest part we pass the ruins of a castle attributed like so many others to Queen Thamara, and a Cossack blockhouse. Balta is the last station, after quitting which we shake ourselves free of the mountains and cross a stretch of level country. About sunset we reach Vladikavkaz.

Being anxious to get to Rostoff as soon as possible, I drove to the station and interviewed the station-master on the subject of strikes; he assured me that the line was still open and that tickets were being issued as far as Rostoff. While waiting for my train I perused the local paper—no Petersburg or Moscow sheets had arrived for days. I then read how that extraordinary strike was spreading with lightning rapidity from one end of the vast Empire to the other. One came on such items as these: "St. Petersburg. The trains on the Baltic railway have ceased running.—Tashkent. All movement on the Central Asiatic line has stopped.—Kiev. The South-Western

railway employees have struck and the train service has ceased.—Irkutsk. The last train on the Siberian railway left yesterday, and the town is now isolated." It showed a most wonderful unanimity and a power of organization among the revolutionists, which no one had suspected, to combine in this monster protest against the continuance of autocracy.

At 9 p.m. we start, and I am soon asleep, fondly imagining that the following day would see me on the banks of the Don. The next morning at eleven we reach Kavkazkaya, a gorgeous station, where lines branch off to Novorossiisk and Stavropol. A porter comes in and calmly informs me that I can go no further; the delegates from Rostoff have arrived that morning and given orders that all trains north of Kavkazkaya should stop. The only course for me to follow is to retrace my steps, for this splendid station has no town or village behind it; it is a station *et præterea nihil*. So back I go towards Vladikavkaz in the pleasing uncertainty as to whether I may not be stranded on the wayside. A Jew from Baku comes into my compartment and informs me that if he is stranded he will go to the district authorities and insist on being given a special train or a carriage and horses, for it was his duty and his right to move on. "Why?" I asked. "Because I am a Jew, and as such the law forbids me to stop in the Terek province; I am a loyal subject of the Tzar and mean to obey his laws." However, there was no need for him to invoke his rights, for we were safely conveyed past Minerallniya Vody to Vladikavkaz, which we reached at 1 a.m.

The Georgian Road. View of the Kazbek.

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There I was stuck for an indefinite time with nothing to do. The wonderful view of the Caucasus rising up out of the plain, like a great wall of ice and snow, was not enough to occupy me all day, and Vladikavkaz has no other resources. Like many other Russian towns it is built on rectangular lines, the streets are broad but dirty and ill-kept; the houses are fairly well built but uninteresting; there are a few decent hotels, and a population of some 45,000—a very mixed and very shady lot, picturesque and villainous. I have rarely seen a place more full of ruffians than the bazar, and murders and robbery were everyday occurrences. Only two days ago a band of Ingushes had come into the town, murdered several people, plundered a couple of houses, and ridden off undisturbed. The night before I arrived a band of seventy Chechens had held up a train near Grozny, murdered fifteen passengers and two guards, and made off with a large amount of booty.

Every day I went to the station to find out when communications were likely to be restored, and always received the same answer: "No news." Each morning a train left Vladikavkaz trying to get through, and every evening it returned, like the doves sent out of the Ark. Never did I realize my ignorance of Russian (bad) language as in those days, for I longed to swear at everything and everybody in Russia, and be understanded of the people.

But I was destined to witness more serious excitement than that caused by strikes and murders. On Tuesday, October 31st, the newsboys came out cry-

ing "*Vuisochaishy Manifest!*" (Imperial Manifesto), and on a small slip of paper I read the Magna Charta of Russian freedom. By strikes and uprisings the workmen and intellectuals had wrested political rights from an unwilling autocracy. Within a couple of hours a demonstration is organized. The extremists soon get the proceedings into their own hands, and patriotic enthusiasm is converted into a Social Democratic demonstration. The schoolboys, who always take the lead on such occasions, are very conspicuous in the procession parading the Alexandrovsky Prospekt. Gradually a large crowd gathers, and the whole population turns out into the streets to discuss the great news, and congratulate each other on being free. Red flags with the word *Svoboda* (freedom) painted on them are waved, and the bands begin to play. The first in the field is the military band, which attempts the Imperial hymn. But the school band follows suit with the *Marseillaise*. A musical duel is engaged between the two airs, recalling a similar episode in Tchaikovsky's "1812" overture, where the Russian anthem eventually drowns the French march, to symbolize Napoleon's defeat before Moscow. But at Vladikavkaz it turns out differently. The anthem is greeted with hoots and hisses, and is finally howled down, whereas the *Marseillaise* is cheered enthusiastically. Other "subversive" airs are sung, including that most mournful of revolutionary songs—*Rabochy Narod.*

The demonstrators are for the most part extremely youthful, many of the schoolboys not being more than ten or twelve. There are also some genuine working

Rostoff-on-the-Don. Burnt Jewish House.

The Darial Gorge.

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men, among whom I notice a type of revolutionary artisan such as is common throughout Europe—short, thin, wiry, nervous, pale-faced, keen-eyed, half-educated, full of ill-digested political ideas. Caucasians in native dress are there too, and a sprinkling of military and *tchinovnik* uniforms. Windows and balconies are crowded with spectators, some of whom wave red handkerchiefs and are cheered in return. From one balcony a solitary figure in a blue uniform is gazing sadly at the proceedings; he is the local commandant of gendarmes, and he is doubtless reflecting that now "Othello's occupation's gone." Speeches of a revolutionary character are delivered here and there, advocating not a monarchical constitution, but a democratic republic. A halt is made before a girls' school, and the *virgines doctæ*, on being invited to join the procession, explain that they cannot do so, as they have been locked in.

But the mild comedy was destined to have a tragic end. The first sign of trouble came the same evening, when a Jewish doctor was set upon by roughs posing as loyalists, who accused him of having insulted the Tzar. The next morning I was walking along the Alexandrovsky Prospekt, when I was startled by the sound of firing, and saw a crowd of people rushing madly down the street. In an instant the iron shutters of the shops came down with a bang and every street door was closed. The red-flag procession had been repeated, but had met a counter-demonstration of "patriots" of the lowest classes, who had not read the manifesto and thought that the intellectuals were engaged in

ROSTOFF-ON-THE-DON. INTERIOR OF THE SYNAGOGUE AFTER THE *pogrom*.

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unfounded, the soldiers and Cossacks riddled it with bullets, broke in, and, accompanied by the mob, sacked it from roof to cellar, smashing everything they could not carry off. The Cossacks then proceeded to loot a number of neighbouring shops and houses in their accustomed way.

Gradually order was restored, and in the evening a thanksgiving service for the Rescript was held in the open air. Thus was freedom celebrated at the foot of the Caucasus.

A few days later the train service was started once more, and I was able to leave for Rostoff. The whole way I heard nothing but tales of riots, massacre, and fighting in other towns, compared with which what I had witnessed at Vladikavkaz was but child's play. At Rostoff itself I saw the effects of the abominable anti-Semitic outrages, and whole streets laid in ruins. From Rostoff onwards it was everywhere the same thing. The train was crowded with Jewish refugees, from Kiev and Odessa chiefly, and ghastly indeed were the tales they told of what Christians had done. One realized the state of mind which made the Sainte Barthélemy possible. How many prayers of thankfulness must have been breathed that day as our train at last steamed into the station of Podwoloczyska, and the black and yellow posts which mark the Austrian boundary appeared!

CHAPTER XVII

RECENT EVENTS IN THE CAUCASUS

THE disturbances which I had witnessed at Vladikavkaz were reproduced on a larger or smaller scale in many other Caucasian towns, and ever since then the agitation has continued in one form or another. A summary of the principal events in Transcaucasia during the last few months is needed to complete the sketch which I have given of that much-disturbed country. The manifesto of October 30th was followed by a series of outbreaks between the revolutionists and the Government, which at Baku took the form of a recrudescence of Armeno-Tartar hostility. Then, while the authorities resorted once more to a policy of brutal repression against the Socialists and Georgian revolutionists, the Armeno-Tartar feud continued unabated, and gave rise to a series of outbreaks.

On October 28th a general political strike broke out at Tiflis, organized by the Social Democrats acting in sympathy with those of Russia, in order to bring about the introduction of constitutional government. The schools closed, the train service was stopped, and the air was full of excitement and appre-

hension. Two days later the Tzar's manifesto was published and the whole population turned out to exult and celebrate the event. The turbulent and revolutionary elements came to the fore, red flag processions paraded the streets, and orators raised on the shoulders of stalwart workmen made impassioned speeches. One speaker pointed out some of the finest houses in the town, and said, "You think that that house belongs to Mr. X., do you not? You are wrong, it belongs to you!" Another proposed that the Viceroy should be hanged, while a third demanded the blood of all the officials and schoolmasters. But in spite of wild speeches, the temper of the crowd was one of rejoicing and happiness, and no violence was actually committed.

The next day came the patriotic demonstration, headed by an officer carrying a portrait of the Tzar; the procession included many well-dressed people who waved Russian flags and sang the National Anthem, and was escorted by Cossacks and police. There was gaiety and high spirits at first, but unfortunately as the procession was returning from the Vera suburb it encountered some schoolboys and Socialist demonstrators, who refused to doff their caps, at the corner of the Baryatinskaya Street. A shot was fired no one knows whence, and the troops then discharged whole volleys into the crowd and against the houses where revolutionists were supposed to be sheltered, and the cavalry trampled people underfoot. For several days the disturbances went on, during which large numbers were killed and wounded, including some schoolboys in the gymnasium where they had been pursued by

Cossacks, and three houses were bombarded by the artillery. Even after the fighting ceased the unrest continued, and it was not until November 10th that a semblance of order was established and the town resumed its normal aspect.

While these events were occurring at Tiflis, Baku was undergoing its third *pogrom*, which was, however, much less serious than the other two. On the famous 31st of October the Social Democrats organized a procession consisting chiefly of Russians, although a number of Armenians and some Tartars took part in it. The proceedings were orderly at first, but it was unlikely that in an atmosphere as highly charged as that of Baku any demonstration could end peacefully. A second demonstration was organized for the next day. That evening a prominent Tartar named Hadji Arslan Ashuroff, who had walked with the demonstrators, was summoned by the Governor-General, and asked by him if he was going to take part in further red flag processions. Ashuroff said that he would, whereupon General Fadeieff asked him, "Do you know what the red flag means?" "It means a demonstration for the manifesto," replied the Tartar. "No it does not, my friend ; it means a demonstration against the Tzar. You Tartars must have nothing to do with it." Ashuroff understood, and the next day a loyalist procession was organized under police auspices, in which he and many of his co-religionists took part. Several Armenian houses were plundered and burnt, and collisions between Liberals and reactionaries, the latter reinforced by Tartar roughs, occurred at various points. On November 3rd a number of Armenians

were murdered at Bailoff. The 4th passed off quietly, but on the 5th a thanksgiving service was held at the Russian Cathedral, at which many Tartars were present, but no Jews nor Armenians, for a friendly Tartar named Safaralieff had warned them that they would be in danger. A patriotic meeting was afterwards held, at which the question of further demonstrations was discussed. The more moderate and liberal party —two currents of opinion had now appeared among the Tartars—took the line that no more processions should be held; the more violent reactionary spirits thought that the occasion was too good to be wasted, and that a demonstration should parade the Armenian quarter on the plea that no Russian flags had appeared there (it seemed monstrous that the Armenians should not love the Russian Government).

A rumour reached the assembly that forty-seven Russian women and children had been murdered by Armenians. The moderate party sent a deputation to the Governor-General to find out if this were true, and were informed that it was a pure invention. But the *patriotards* insisted on going to the Armenian quarter, and General Fadeieff finally gave them permission and an escort of Cossacks. As was only to be expected, the demonstrators proceeded to plunder and burn houses and shops, and even attacked a refuge for the aged. But they killed nobody, leaving that task to the Cossacks, who killed or wounded about eighty people. On the 6th an order was issued to the troops to fire on looters, and peace was at once restored.

On this occasion the leading Tartars seem to have

tried to keep order, the trouble being due to the hooligans, both Russian and Tartar. Subsequently a joint proclamation was issued by several revolutionary committees, including a Moslem one, stating that they had formed an alliance to protect innocent people from the hooligans.

In the Western Caucasus disturbances of all sorts continued. At Batum murders and robbery were more numerous than ever, strikes broke out, and the whole life of the town was suspended for weeks. Various other coast towns were in open revolt, and a bombardment by warships had to be resorted to. In Guria collisions took place from the 29th of October onwards. At Ozurgety the Gurians held their own against the troops; a large part of the railway was in the hands of the revolutionists, and the train service stopped. At Kutais disturbances took place and the revolutionary party was predominant. On the 14th M. Staroselsky, the Governor, went to Tiflis by a special train provided by the revolutionists to confer with the Viceroy. The Government was still disposed to treat the Georgians leniently, and M. Staroselsky received a mandate to abolish martial law in Georgia and make wide concessions. Trains were not yet running between Tiflis and the West, but on the 17th the Social Democrats again ran a special for M. Staroselsky, which left Tiflis draped with red flags amidst the cheers of the people. Although some further collisions between the troops and the Georgians occurred, the Western provinces were more or less pacified for a time, and the Gurian question appeared satisfactorily settled.

KUTAIS. SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC DEMONSTRATION IN OCTOBER.
Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

KUTAIS. DEMONSTRATION IN OCTOBER. COSSACKS ON GUARD.
Photo by J. Gordon Browne.

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This "Pax Caucasica" lasted about a fortnight, during which every one thought that the Empire was on the high-road to freedom and prosperity. But at the end of November the town of Elizavetpol, which had hitherto been free from disturbances, felt that its reputation as a respectable Caucasian city was seriously compromised, and that it must not remain out in the cold. Elizavetpol has some 33,000 inhabitants, of whom the majority are Tartars and the rest Armenians; the government of which it is the capital contains 557,000 Moslems (of whom 374,000 are Shiahs) and 293,000 Armenians. Throughout the summer and autumn a number of outbreaks had occurred in the province, though not in the town, where only murders and abductions had been committed. The Governor-General Takaishvili took no measures to avert trouble, although the two races were arming fast. The town is divided into two parts by the Ghanjinka, at that time a dry water-course; the Armenians live on the right bank, the Tartars on the left. On the 29th of November the Tartars, reinforced by armed and mounted bands from outside, proceeded to attack the Armenians, but the latter, although less numerous, were better disciplined. For two days the fighting went on, and a large part of the town was set on fire. General Takaishvili ordered the troops not to interfere, but at last the Viceroy dismissed him and put General Fleischer in his place. The latter now took energetic measures and placed a detachment of troops at the bridge across the Ghanjinka, with one gun pointing up stream and another down, and he threatened to

fire on all who should try to cross. But fighting did take place on a large and systematic scale; the station, which is five versts from the town, was defended by some soldiers and Armenian and Russian volunteers against a horde of Tartars. A good half of Elizavetpol was in flames, and numbers of people were killed. General Malama now arrived from Tiflis with reinforcements, inflicted heavy losses on the Tartars, and insisted on a pacification. Both parties were disposed to stop fighting, but unfortunately some Tartars were murdered in the Armenian quarter and some Armenians in the Tartar quarter very soon after, and fighting began again. It is said that a number of police agents went about carefully undoing the work done by General Malama, and egging on the two races against each other. Nevertheless, after a few days' desultory firing, quiet was restored. In the remote districts there were sporadic encounters from time to time, and Tartar bands plundered the countryside.

The Elizavetpol riots were followed by a similar outbreak at Tiflis a few days later. The Tartars there number about 10,000 or 15,000, and live in the southern quarters round the Maidan. The trouble began with the inevitable series of murders of Tartars and Armenians, which many people believe to have been organized or instigated by the police. Much excitement was caused thereby, and it spread to the surrounding country. On December 3rd the Tartars and Turks attacked the Armenians in the bazar quarter, but the Christians being prepared, defended themselves successfully and burnt some

Tartar houses. But a rumour was spread about that the Tartars from Bortchalu, a place south-west of Tiflis, were marching towards the city to plunder it under the leadership of one Yedigaroff, a Tartar officer in the Russian army, and that a number of Georgian and Armenian villages had been looted and their inhabitants killed. There was great alarm among all classes, and the Solalaki quarter, where the Armenians live, "was," in the words of an eye-witness, "like a disturbed ant-hill. Many families left Tiflis, and every man armed himself, even the schoolboys went about with revolver or *kinjal*." Mounted troops patrolled the town ceaselessly, and the Viceroy solemnly promised the citizens that the Bortchalu Tartars would be kept out. The Armenians occupied the citadel hill and the Avlabar on the opposite side of the river, thus commanding the Bortchalu road. Suddenly it became known that Tartars from other places had come into the town; a deputation of the town council immediately repaired to the Viceroy at 9 p.m., and after waiting some hours was informed by his Excellency that he had promised to keep out the Bortchalu Tartars, and this he had done, but he was not responsible for the others! However he promised to expel those who had got in and prevent further incursions. The Maidan (Tartan quarter) was still in flames, and a determined attack on the Armenian position was made by the Bortchalu Tartars, who were driven back with heavy losses. For two or three days the fighting continued, but the Armenians were admirably organized and disciplined and gave a very good account of themselves.

Then the Social Democrats held a meeting and decided that the Tartar-Armenian feud was not in accordance with Socialist principles, and must be stopped. They sent a deputation to the Viceroy, who had completely lost his head, offering to restore order if he gave them arms; by some strange freak of the bureaucratic mind the offer was accepted and 500 rifles were served out to the Socialists. They marched forth in a body and took up positions in the Avlabar and the botanical gardens between the Armenians and the Tartars. But the Tartars did not see the point, and proceeded to fire on the Socialists for all the world as if they had been Armenians, and killed a few of them, whereupon the Socialists promptly retreated behind the Armenian lines. Finally some reinforcements of troops arrived, and General Malama intervened and occupied the positions hitherto held by the Armenians who were sent back into the town. By December 12th the Tartar attacks ceased, and eventually a pacification was arranged in the usual way. The officers of the garrison told the Viceroy that the fact that the defence of the town was entrusted to Armenian, Georgian, and Russian volunteers was an insult to the army, whereupon he ordered the revolutionaries to give up their arms. This they refused to do, and finally a compromise was agreed to, by which the defence of Tiflis was undertaken by the troops and volunteers together. Soldiers and revolutionists fraternized and all went on happily for a few weeks, but murders and fires proceeded without abatement.

Three weeks later this much-tried city was again

the scene of disturbances, due this time not to Tartar-Armenian hatred but to the general wave of reaction which now set in all over Russia. A meeting of officials and officers, under the presidency of General Gryaznoff, was held at the headquarters' staff, where a series of repressive measures was organized. Numbers of people were arrested, and a general reversal of the former conciliatory policy was inaugurated. The Tartar General Alikhanoff was made Governor-General of Tiflis, and martial law was proclaimed. A strike of railwaymen and post and telegraph clerks broke out on December 28th as a protest against the reaction, and spread to other trades. For some days Tiflis was without food or kerosene. The authorities issued an order that on the 30th, at midday, the shops must reopen, under threats of fines and imprisonment, but the revolutionary committee insisted on their being closed, and closed they remained. On January 3rd the committee gave orders that the strike was to end, and the shops were to reopen at midday, promising security to the inhabitants. At midday every shop was open. But disturbances did not altogether cease. Some bombs were thrown, and several houses destroyed by the troops. On the 7th the soldiers and Cossacks proceeded to loot the shops, near which bombs had exploded. They set some houses on fire, and shot down all the inmates who tried to escape. Another detachment proceeded to a general massacre of railwaymen; no one knows how many were killed, but eye-witnesses report that several cartloads of bodies were removed at night.

General Gryaznoff, who had organised the repression, was assassinated a month later.

When order was restored in Tiflis General Alikhanoff was sent into Western Georgia as Governor-General to crush the revolutionary movement. The Gurians and Imeretins held the line between Mikhailovo and Batum, and resisted desperately. Whole districts were now given over to the Cossacks and devastated. Mikhailovo, Karely, Chiatury, Kvirili, Notaneby, and other villages were bombarded and burnt, as well as parts of Ozurgety, Batum, Poti, and Kutais. In Batum and Kutais there were barricades and severe street fighting. The Cossacks committed nameless atrocities on the inhabitants, behaving exactly like bashi-buzuks. In the course of the repression an extraordinary and almost incredible incident occurred. An impostor, who passed himself off as an *aide-de-camp* to General Alikhanoff, went about the country, and was given detachments of Cossacks, with which he plundered and burnt several villages, and actually arrested M. Staroselsky and his assistant at Kutais, and sent them to General Alikhanoff's headquarters! On their meeting the General the imposture was discovered, but the *aide-de-camp* had disappeared. Some people are inclined to doubt whether the man were really an impostor after all, and whether perhaps he might not be merely a tool of the police. Colour is given to this suspicion by the fact that all through these events the Government has been following two lines of policy, and also by the fact that M. Staroselsky and his assistant, although not under arrest, are now

being tried for complicity with the revolutionists. The whole of this preposterous story was printed in the Russian press, where the initials of the impostor were given.

Gradually the troops succeeded in getting the upper hand. One by one the railway stations were recaptured and communications restored about the end of January, although the service continued to be extremely erratic, as large numbers of the railwaymen had been killed or imprisoned, and the rest were thoroughly disaffected. Wholesale arrests and shooting went on for weeks, but the leaders of the movement succeeded in escaping. All the towns and many of the villages were more or less "pacified," and the revolution may be regarded as crushed. But the committees are by no means dead, and are resorting to their old methods of terrorism, assassination, and bomb-throwing.

"Neither the Government nor the revolutionists," a well-informed foreign resident writes to me from Batum, "has achieved a definite result. The former has, however, reacquired a part of its lost prestige, owing to the effective action of the troops who have not only shown themselves loyal to the old *régime*, but here in the Caucasus, on account of racial and other differences, have acted with cruelty and ferocity. The situation is anything but a happy one, and we are further than ever from a real pacification and a return to normal existence."

The general position of things in the Caucasus may be summed up as follows: in Western Transcaucasia revolt against the Government repressed by force,

but still latent and dangerous; in the east Tartars and Armenians still at daggers drawn, both well armed, while the Government either does nothing at all or attempts with one hand to pacify a feud which it stirs up with the other, and in many districts it is leaving the two races to fight out their quarrel undisturbed. Count Vorontzoff-Dashkoff, his nerves shattered and his health broken, now swayed by Sultan Krym-Ghirei and M. Staroselsky, inclines towards liberalism, now by the *Ober-Politzmeister* and General Alikhanoff, towards reaction.

. . . . .

What the outcome of this anarchy will be I do not venture to prophesy. But we may draw certain deductions from known facts. In the first place the conditions of the Caucasus will depend primarily on those of Russia itself. The triumph of the reaction—the permanent triumph, I mean, if such a thing be possible—will result in the perpetuating of the present state of things, viz., anarchy repressed, but always more or less latent and ready to break out whenever the Government, owing to external circumstances, is weakened. In no case will the authorities be able to count on a revival of loyalty to Tzardom and of reactionary tendencies among the masses as they can to a large extent in Russia. The Caucasian peoples have none of that sacred veneration for the person of the Tzar which the Russian peasants feel; they can only be made to acquiesce in reaction by force, and as rebels they are more difficult to deal with, in their mountain fastnesses, than the Russian inhabitants of plains and broad-streeted cities.

If, on the other hand, the Liberals triumph to any extent and some form of constitution is introduced, there is more chance of really pacifying the Caucasus. At the same time it must not be thought that the problem will be easily settled, as some enthusiastic revolutionists imagine. Hatred of Russia and the racial and religious differences, which recent events have intensified, must be taken into account, and some form of government devised by which justice shall be done to all sections of the community. The Georgian Nationalists, whose views I have set forth in detail in another chapter, desire the autonomy of the Caucasus, and possibly a special autonomy for Georgia. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, would disregard all racial distinctions and apply a sort of procrustean bed of uniformity to the whole Empire on a basis of crude and ill-digested economic and political theories. The Armenians to some extent oppose autonomy, as they fear they will be swamped by other more numerous races. The Tartars, they say, will "plump" for the candidates proposed by their own khans and begs without question, so that the Armenians will be almost unrepresented. Others, however, believe that by a system of proportional representation this danger will be avoided, and here I think they are right. In my opinion proportional representation is the only fair basis of election in countries where the population is mixed and national feeling runs high. In the Caucasus, nationalism has been greatly increased and strengthened by recent events, and even the Tartars are being imbued with a sense of their common racial

origin. The great bulk of the Armenian people would be satisfied with a *régime* which protected them from the attacks of the Tartars, guaranteed the immunity and independence of their Church, allowed them freedom of education, and left them in peace to attend to their own affairs ; in the matter of political rights they ask for nothing more than a very moderate form of constitution, and an honest and responsible administration. Were these demands granted, they would be the pillars of law and order in the Caucasus, the steadiest and most reliable element of the population.

On the question of liberty of language and education, all sections of the community are agreed. There is also no disagreement as to the necessity that the Government put an end once and for all to brigandage and private vengeance, which contribute more than anything else to retard the development of the country.

The races of the Caucasus contain many valuable elements which should prove of great use to Russia, and indeed to the common patrimony of civilization. They possess many qualities in which the Russians are deficient, and might thus provide a leaven to the inert and somewhat inorganic mass of the *mujiks*. But, on the other hand, they themselves require to be under the protection of a strong Empire, which alone can prevent internecine racial and religious warfare, and ensure their economic and civil development ; at all events for the present they cannot stand alone any more than Poland can. If the Caucasus is less exposed to foreign aggression than Poland, it is far more divided, and has no national unity. But the

Russia under whom they can prosper should be a very different one from that which has existed at present. It remains to be seen whether a liberalized and progressive Russia will succeed in dealing with the problem which the autocratic and bureaucratic Russia has failed to solve.

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